

Florin Japanese American Citizens League  
Oral History Project

Oral History Interview

with

Marion Tsutakawa Kanemoto

December 1991  
Sacramento, California

By Debbie Roberts  
Florin Japanese American Citizens League  
Oral History Project  
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## "TWO TIMES WRONGED"

Childhood in Seattle was ideal for us in the 1930's, but after Pearl Harbor, my father was unjustly picked up by the FBI and sent to federal prisons in Montana and New Mexico. The family lost a successful business, and financial assets were confiscated by the Alien Property Custodian. It was life without father for 18 months. There was my mother, myself (14), Bob (12), and Richard (8), and our address became Minidoka Camp, Block 19-6-E. It was some comfort to have relatives and friends in block 17.

Father became ill with no hope of uniting with his family and chose the option to repatriate to Okayama (where my older brother, James was attending school). We were then restored as a family and were aboard the SS Gripsholm, the exchange ship for POW's on its second trip. As a teenager, I yearned to stay with my friends in camp, but as a minor, had no choice but to leave with my family.

The Gripsholm sailed from New York to the South American cities of Rio de Janeiro and Montivideo, then eastward past Africa's Cape of Good Hope to Goa, India, where we had to transfer to the Teiya Maru to complete the trip to Japan. Accommodations and food on the Gripsholm were a luxury compared to those on the Teiya Maru.

Life in war-time Japan was acceptable for a while, but it soon turned for the worse as the allies started winning the war. As Americans, we were called "a-me-ri-ka-jin" and were ostracised, especially in school. Those were dismal, difficult days in war-time and post-war Japan.

When peace came, we planned our return to the U. S. in separate ways. With borrowed money, I managed to return to Seattle in 1948 and to nursing school in Rochester, MN. Brothers Bob and Richard volunteered into the U. S. Army in Japan, served in the Korean War, and returned to the U. S. upon discharge. Father and mother made it back to Seattle in 1957, but could only find jobs as a house-cook and maid. More sadly, they passed away prematurely (age 62 and 68).

We, who were children in the POW exchange were denied the redress for those in camp until much later, and only after a class-action lawsuit "Marion Kanemoto vs. Janet Reno" was filed by the law firm of Morrison and Foerster, pro-bono, as initiated by my son, Ames, and his legal friends. Fortunately, the Justice Dept. reconsidered, and we received the redress and apology from President Clinton in October, 1996. Attorney James McCabe of the law firm labeled the case as "Two Times Wronged". Of 345 minor "repatriates", 215 received the redress.

American justice prevailed, but such injustices must never be allowed to happen again. In spite of it all, the U. S. still turned out to be the land of opportunity for us...Richard became a bank manager, Bob became a college professor, and I became a school nurse.

By Marion (Tsutakawa) Kanemoto  
For Minidoka Camp Reunion, 2003



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 16, 1996

More than fifty years ago, the United States Government unjustly interned, evacuated, relocated, or otherwise deprived you and many other Japanese Americans of your liberty. Today, on behalf of your fellow Americans, I offer my sincere apologies for the actions that unfairly denied Japanese Americans and their families fundamental liberties during World War II.

In passing the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, we acknowledged the wrongs of the past and offered redress to those who endured such grave injustice. In retrospect, we understand that the nation's actions were rooted deeply in racial prejudice and wartime hysteria. We must learn from the past and dedicate ourselves as a nation to renewing the spirit of equality and our love of freedom. Working together, we can make the most of our great diversity.

You and your family have my best wishes for the future.

Bill Clinton





# JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE

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## PREFACE

In the summer of 1987, a small group of people from the Florin JACL met at Mary and Al Tsukamoto's home to plan a new project for the organization. Because of the unique history of Florin, we felt that there were special stories that needed to be preserved. The town of Florin, California was once a thriving farming community with a large Japanese American population. The World War II internment of persons of Japanese ancestry living on the west coast, devastated the town and it never recovered. Today there is no town of Florin; it has been merged into the larger county of Sacramento. Many Japanese Americans who reside throughout the United States, however, have their origins from Florin, or have relatives and friends who once had ties to this community. The town may no longer exist, but the spirit of the community continues to survive in people's hearts and memories.

Several hours have been devoted to interviewing former Florin residents. The focus of the interviews was on the forced internment and life in the relocation camps, but our questions touched on other issues. We asked about their immigration to the United States from Japan, pre-war experiences, resettlement after the war and personal philosophies. We also wanted to record the stories of the people left behind. They were friends and neighbors who watched in anguish as the trains transported the community away.

We have conducted these interviews with feelings of urgency. If we are to come away with lessons from this historic tragedy, we must listen to and become acquainted with the people who were there. Many of these historians are in their 70's, 80's and 90's. We are grateful that they were willing to share their experiences and to answer our questions with openness and thoughtfulness.

We owe special thanks to James F. Carlson, former Assistant Dean of American River College and to Jackie Reinier, former Director of the Oral History Program at California State University in Sacramento. Without their enthusiasm, encouragement and expertise, we never could have produced this collection of oral histories. We also wish to acknowledge the project members, volunteers, the Florin JACL which contributed financial support, Sumitomo Bank for their corporate donation, and the Taisho Young Mens Association which contributed some of their assets as they dissolved their corporation on December 31, 1991.



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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

### Interviewer:

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### Circumstances of Interview:

The taped recorded interview took place during two separate interviews at the home of Marion Kanemoto, 40 Shoreline Circle, Sacramento, California. The first session involved the presentation of the information; whereas, the second session was a follow-up session to clarify issues and questions. The initial interview was the first encounter between the interviewer and Mrs. Kanemoto, although we had talked previously over the telephone. This interview was transcribed by Debbie Roberts. The editing was conducted by Marion Kanemoto and various alterations were made to the manuscript.

During this interview Mrs. Kanemoto was asked to focus on her life experiences regarding her internment during World War II and briefly thereafter. The interview was conducted for an Ethnic Studies course.

Mrs. Kanemoto presented an interesting and thought-provoking account of her life and the lives of her family members. Her story--compelled evacuation to an enemy land during World War II--is seldom explored in examinations regarding World War II and the internment. While her account is very interesting, it is but one piece of the larger story. Mrs. Kanemoto exposed the interviewer to new information regarding the internment of the Japanese Americans and for that I thank her.



## BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

Marion Masako Tsutakawa Kanemoto and her husband James are long-time residents of Sacramento, California. They moved to Sacramento in the 1970s. They have been married for over forty-two years and have four children.

Kanemoto was born in Seattle, Washington on January 3, 1928. Her father, George Joji Tsutakawa, was an export-import businessman. Her mother, Yachiyo [Fukutake] Tsutakawa, was a housewife. Both mother and father were born in Okayama, Japan, he in 1898 and she in 1906.

The only daughter of four children, Kanemoto attended grade school and junior high in Seattle. She attended high school in Okayama, Japan and graduated in 1946. In 1952, She married James Akira Kanemoto in Rochester, Minnesota. Their first child, Ryusanne Chiyo, was born in 1952, their second, Arleen Yasu, in 1955, their third, Laurie Jo, in 1961, and their youngest, Ames Joji, in 1962.

Upon Kanemoto's return to America, she graduated from St. Mary's School of Nursing. In 1973, Kanemoto graduated from California State University, Sacramento. With a B.S.N. in nursing, she began a career with the Elk Grove School district as a school nurse. She continued working in the Elk Grove School district until her retirement in 1989.

Kanemoto is very active within the Sacramento community. In 1955, Kanemoto was an instructor for the American Red Cross Nursing Service. She was the chair of several projects for the California School Nursing Organization. She is a board member of the Matsuyama-Sacramento, Sister City Corps. Her recent contribution to the community involves chairing the Florin Japanese American Citizens League's Oral History Project. She has been a board member of the Florin Japanese American Citizens League since 1989. Kanemoto provides her services as a school nurse as a substitute volunteer for the Elk Grove School District. In order to provide some balance in her life Kanemoto has taken up golf during her retirement. She continues to improve her golf game and spend time with her children and grandchildren.



[Session 1, December 1991]

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

ROBERTS: I have some questions. When it comes to interviewing I'm not formal. Whatever you want to throw out there.

KANEMOTO: I'll focus in on the ethnic studies, is that alright?

ROBERTS: This is for Ethnic Studies 110, Asian-Americans. Anything you think important [emotionally], politically, socially.

KANEMOTO: I thought this was interesting being that you said it was ethnic studies and it doesn't concern all Japanese, but I was born on December 30th. You have probably heard that in Japan or many Asian countries when you're born you're one [year-old]. At two days old [in my case] I would be two and my mother [Yachiyo Fukutake] was a December 16th born, so she knew what a disadvantage that would be to me. Being that I was a girl, she registered my birthday as



January 3rd. If I were a boy January 1st would have been okay, but see being the female she carefully chose the third. So my birthday has been January 3rd. Okay what is this? [Showing a paper package 1" X 2"] This is a navel cord that has dropped off. When the baby is born and your navel cord drops off they carefully dry it up and then they package it and often times they'll put a red and white ribbon on it [for happiness called Shiori]. They have a traditional ribbon. They put the date when you were born on it and they keep it. When you get married they pass it on, you take it with you. When I die this will be buried with me. My mother told me that story and then when she passed away she had all this, her navel cord in an envelope. I looked at mine and sure enough the date is [December 29]. By today's standards you would say income tax exemption, so an advantage but in this case no, that was not important. That wasn't the primary concern. So January 3rd was the better [choice] Of course that makes me younger. [Laughter] This is for the beginning of an ethnic tradition.



ROBERTS: I'm curious, is January 1st only reserved for male or male births?

KANEMOTO: No, it was just the choice of my parents. But I think if I were a male they would choose the first because they want you to be number one, but the girls you can be a little bit behind-- meaning two steps behind. They were very sexist in those times.

ROBERTS: Which at the time it really wasn't.

KANEMOTO: I thought this might be different and it's very ethnic.

ROBERTS: Your parents, did they migrate to America or were they born here?

KANEMOTO: They migrated here. They're called the Issei from Japan. My father [George Joji Tsutakawa] was here following the footsteps of his four brothers, and he came here in about 1921 as a young man. Then he went back to Japan to marry my mother, who was a relative of another sister-in-law. The area was Okayama.

ROBERTS: Was it arranged before he even left for America?

KANEMOTO: Yes, being that she was a sister-in-law's cousin. My mother was my father's sister-in-law's cousin. It was kind of prearranged, so he



would have to go personally to check her out and I think it was more of a privilege. Because if you didn't have the money you wouldn't have that privilege to go back and then bring her back.

ROBERTS: Yes that's true. I've read a few biographies and that seems to be the major goal, trying to save enough money to go back to Japan.

KANEMOTO: Right. I did remember that my mother said that because my father was an export importer--they were married in 1924--meaning that the immigration law was closed for the Japanese, but so long as my father travelled as a treaty merchant. . . . But then he had to prove he had the means or the money, so my mother said she had to dress very appropriately, came here first class. It's kind of a front, not really rich, but that was the only way she could come over. And so as the pictures prove she had to carry that front of being a first-class passenger.

ROBERTS: Was she excited about coming to America? Because I know some people, in the books we've read, have married men specially for that reason, to come to America.



KANEMOTO: I think my mother was very, what do you call it, modern, very open, adventuresome. She was educated for people of that period. She did complete high school. Many of them finished the middle school and that was it, they went into vocational school, but my mother did finish high school. She was very adventuresome and I think she really was looking forward and willing. She had an older sister but then she was the one who said that this might be interesting.

ROBERTS: When she came, I assume your father had the house all settled, and she came here with some place to go.

KANEMOTO: Right, because my father was in an established business, a family business of export-import. He was the fifth son. His oldest brother started it from twenty years ago. He made quite a fortune. The second and third son who made their fortune had already left and started a very lucrative business in Japan. So when the fourth one came over he had a severe stroke at the age of thirty-seven, so he wasn't able to do much. But he did have a family and so my father kind of oversaw his family as well as ours. So my



father--I guess it's the timing--he was the one that was kind of stuck with the business during the World War II period, pre-war.

ROBERTS: Did he come to America, your father, because of being the fifth or youngest son because there weren't many opportunities available to him in Japan?

KANEMOTO: Let's see now. Because all his older brothers had done well; came to America and made a fortune and gone back and started businesses, I think he thought this is the way to do it. Because of his age, he was twenty years younger than his oldest brother, he was just caught by World War II. A lot of it was lumber that was shipped out as he bought lumber in the Northwest, even in Canada and then exported it to Japan and vice versa. All kinds of commodities that they exchanged.

ROBERTS: So he was basically into lumber then?

KANEMOTO: All sorts of things, I saw food stuffs, rice, pickles, chinaware. . . .

ROBERTS: Did he do this his whole life?

KANEMOTO: Well that was his primary.

ROBERTS: I'm curious what would cause the American government . . .



KANEMOTO: . . . because of this he really got labeled as a very high-risk person, because he was working with the shipping industry. He was paroled eventually but at that time he was tagged as a very high security risk, that was all there was to it.

ROBERTS: Because he must have established contact with Japan.

KANEMOTO: He had several employees. I had a very comfortable childhood.

ROBERTS: So did they own their property and have it registered in your name because of the Alien Land Law.

KANEMOTO: Okay. I happened to be one of the younger Niseis and so at that time, no we were not of age to buy property in our names. So my father did borrow my cousin's name [George Tsutakawa], because it was a Tsutakawa, T-S-U-T-A-K-A-W-A that's my maiden name. George Tsutakawa, my cousin who is an artist, is the name he used. He was so called the president of the company. You have a good grasp of it already.



ROBERTS: Did your father agree, because in one of the books we've read, one of the gentlemen agreed that for the use of this other gentleman's name he would pay for this student to go to medical school. Was there anything of that nature?

KANEMOTO: No.

ROBERTS: No, probably because they were related and these two gentlemen weren't.

KANEMOTO: We were related, so we did alot of extended family helping. We helped each other out. Actually this artist being that he was different and his father being a businessman tried to disown him, saying that you are not productive enough when he was living in Japan. Remember I said my father's oldest brother had made his fortune and gone back to Japan and being that this George, who is a renown artist today, just didn't fit into the business; well he was sent back to Seattle where my father's business was. To be used as a labor hand.

ROBERTS: So did his father basically. . .

KANEMOTO: . . . kind of disowned him. He didn't do well. He had more behavioral problems in high school . . .



ROBERTS: . . . than what was basically allowed.

KANEMOTO: Right, that's right.

ROBERTS: I see. That's an interesting story.

KANEMOTO: So he was bitter at that time because I think my father had kind of mistook him, too. When you're actually told to take over a nephew, when he had behavioral problems, he didn't fit in, and his father had disowned him, well my father didn't think that he had any talent. But see, George was an artist.

ROBERTS: I have a son who is a very good artist and you have a tendency to not take art as a serious form of making a living. It's like [we force people to] do something else. Even in today's world we still have a tendency, we don't give art the credit that it really deserves. I can see that back then, where you're suppose to follow these patterns and if you strayed outside of them it would be really difficult.

KANEMOTO: So with George as successful as he is, at times I think he was bitter, because he claims he wanted to go to Europe to study art but here he was stuck with our family business and working for his uncle.



ROBERTS: For my own personal curiosity, did he ever work things out with his father?

KANEMOTO: He finally did, just before his father past away in the mid-70s. He did.

ROBERTS: He's very talented.

KANEMOTO: Oh yes. He is internationally well known.

ROBERTS: What's his name?

KANEMOTO: George Tsutakawa.

ROBERTS: Because I had an art class and he looks familiar and some of the work looks familiar. I know you were born December 29 would you mind telling me the year?

KANEMOTO: Oh, it would be twenty-seven.

ROBERTS: 1927.

KANEMOTO: But I have to use a twenty-eight. See January 3, 1928 is my birthday, legally.

ROBERTS: When you were born, I'm assuming there was a midwife or did your mother go to a hospital?

KANEMOTO: In those days it was all midwives, but my mother was of the privileged lot, so she had a [Japanese] woman physician [Dr. Ide] come into the home. Otherwise you would have a midwife, but my mother's attending person was a woman physician.



ROBERTS: So on your actual birth certificate, does it say January the third?

KANEMOTO: Yes it does. Legally there's no claim. They couldn't really do anything. [Laughter]

ROBERTS: That's really interesting.

KANEMOTO: Well, that's why I thought of this. When you said ethnic I thought well this may be different. Your instructor may find it different.

ROBERTS: I don't know if he knows or not. When you were growing up obviously you had somewhat of a privileged life compared to Japanese farmworkers and things of this nature. The type of community that you lived in? Brothers and sisters that you had? Maybe real vague. I know it's hard to go into it, but just relationships in the family.

KANEMOTO: I had three other brothers. [James, Robert, and Richard Tsutakawa] One older and two younger. We got along quite well. I don't know where this will fit in, but when my older brother was twelve, the family took our first family trip back to Japan and that was the time my oldest brother was left there [1937].

ROBERTS: How old were you at this time?



KANEMOTO: I would be ten. This was done traditionally with many families. To travel to my father's parents and [to show] we still have ties. We'll come back someday here's the proof, we'll leave our first son. This is proof of this, that we'll be coming back and so that contributed to a lot of problems with us during the war. Because here we were now separated three-ways. My brother was in Japan, my father was picked up as top-security by the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation]. What triggered it was when Singapore fell. It seemed like anytime Japan invaded a certain place or made some moves, well then, another bunch of so-many Japanese were picked up. My father was picked up right after Singapore fell [to the Japanese].

ROBERTS: I'm kind of surprised from reading these books and hearing you now talk about your father, the main goal was to come over here, make enough money and go back. And that seems to be what your father's goal was.

KANEMOTO: I think initially all of them felt that way. Even in my work with the oral history, but then after they [Isseis] lived here twenty or thirty



years and they find that their children are beginning to settle down here, their parents who live in Japan are dead or dying, so there really isn't any reason or obligation to go back anymore. So I think it's just like any European immigrant, I mean that's the way it becomes. Where you live for ten, twenty, or thirty years, that becomes home. [Pause] I don't think really deep down my parents ever thought that they would really go back to Japan and stay there and retire there. Because you know, what you work with is your environment and just because you have a lot of money and take it back with you [doesn't] mean you have friends there. You don't have any networking there. So I don't think you can be too comfortable or happy there.

ROBERTS: How did your brother feel, how do you think he felt, how did he feel about staying there? And how did the rest of the family, like you, feel about him staying there? Was there any conflict?

KANEMOTO: He was accepting of the fact. Now you have to remember there was no war at that time. This is prewar, 1937. So many of the Japanese families were doing this and there was the promise that



you'll eventually come back and we'll be together. My parents were educated. They communicated by letter. They were corresponding. And my parents were sending money both to my mother's side as well as my father's side, so they were kind of depending on that. So there were close ties. I don't think he felt like he was being neglected. Now I think there's some feelings where he was left behind and he had to fend for himself. Again when the war came, the money stopped coming in. When the World War II started, the money stopped coming in and no correspondence and I heard that he was pretty devastated at that time. Worried how are we going to make ends meet.

ROBERTS: Did he stay with your dad's parents or mom's parents or go between the two of them?

KANEMOTO: My father's side. The timing was such that when he became eighteen we were already back in Japan or [my parents chose to ] repatriate back to Japan in 1943. I remember my brother [James] was drafted as soon as he became eighteen. Of course, the war had progressed to the point where the men population was getting scarce, so



he was picked up. What happened was [that] he was one of the recruits that gathered all the atomic bomb victims and put them in for mass burial. It's really something. To this day because of that exposure [to the atomic bomb] he has a lifetime guarantee for health care by the [Japanese] government.

ROBERTS: By the United States government?

KANEMOTO: No, by the Japanese government. Because he was exposed to all that radiation.

ROBERTS: Has he remained in Japan, then?

KANEMOTO: He has remained there. He has regained his American citizenship. He was born here. He went back and then he lost it but then . . .

ROBERTS: . . . I know you said you went back and since you were a juvenile you had really no difficulty in getting your citizenship and your passport. Is that correct?

KANEMOTO: No. No, I didn't have.

ROBERTS: Yea, you didn't have.

KANEMOTO: I didn't have.

ROBERTS: Did he renege or revoke his. . . . Or because he served in the Japanese army?



KANEMOTO: I think initially if you served in any military service you would lose it [citizenship]. But then with time things were, I guess, adjusted or corrected to say that you can so long as he was drafted. It's not that he volunteered, because of that they softened down the rules. He was able to regain it, though he never exercised any part that he was an American. He is very strongly bilingual because of his earliest years, up to age twelve, was in the United States. Your formative years establish your English language. Then by the time he went to college he decided what should I become. By that time, heat of the war and all, people get the attitude well I don't care, it's not going to make that much difference. So he got accepted into an English teacher's college. That's where he ended up attending after the war, when I say war it's World War II, and becoming a teacher. But then again, he went into other areas because at occupation time anyone with a bilingual [ability] had an advantage.

ROBERTS: Did he ever work for the military in that capacity? As say a translator?



KANEMOTO: He did. Then during peace time, after the occupation, he ended up working for an American-owned auto insurance [AIU]. Actually an insurance company. Then he became an adjustor. He lived a fairly good life as a Japanese.

ROBERTS: We'll write a family history here. It's fascinating.

KANEMOTO: It is overwhelming, so this is why I just gather information and that's about it, I haven't done anything with it.

ROBERTS: I can imagine. All this information and all these different avenues to pursue. The community you lived in, basically a Japanese-American?

KANEMOTO: In Seattle?

ROBERTS: Yes, in Seattle.

KANEMOTO: Yes, my father was one who had great foresight. About 1937, he knew that with Japan being at war with China for several years, he knew things were happening. He knew it would affect his export-import business so at that time he bought on the main drag, on Jackson street, a large supermarket. And opened the largest, in those days 1937, supermarket with a wide front. The main street was a very chancy thing, but then



again something that was kind of daring. My father was a people person, so he was able to get some loyal workers together. He had a butcher, the florist department. At that time of the era, I thought he really was a gutsy man to start a big business. I can't tell you the dimension of it but it's comparable to any supermarket of today.

ROBERTS: This was registered in this gentlemen's name [George Tsutakawa] also?

KANEMOTO: Right, right. He's the president and there was, I know, a caucasian attorney [Mr. Griffin] who took care of the legal things for the business. He was the VP [Vice President], name only, I think a courtesy was extended to him.

ROBERTS: Did the whole family work in the store?

KANEMOTO: Not really. Because you see we were minors yet. This is 1937 and my brother was what twelve and he was left in Japan, I was ten.

ROBERTS: So you didn't work in the store.

KANEMOTO: No, not really. I don't think my parents would have [allowed us] until we finished our education, I don't think they would have held us to it. We went there to fool around. [ ]



My other two brothers were eight and four. So in preparation for the war, the Asian war, the Chinese-Japanese war, thinking that the export-import business would be lost, he opened a supermarket. But he maintained the two businesses, the export and the supermarket, when the property opened up next to the supermarket he bought and moved his export-import business right next door, so they were side by side. So here we had about a eighth of the block to his credit.

ROBERTS: Was he right? Did the export business decrease?

KANEMOTO: Yes, it did. And the rest of the block had a barbershop, ice cream and ten-cents store, a drugstore with pharmacy. They were all owned by other Japanese. It was the upper or newer portion of Japanese town and all these little shops were run several hours, not eight to five kind of businesses, they were open from eight to maybe nine or ten in the evening and run by the family. The families lived behind the stores. In my case, my father was different, he just felt the family needs to be separated, so he bought, again with my cousin's name, a private residence. Let's see about five miles away.



ROBERTS: In this the Japanese section?

KANEMOTO: No, in Seattle area where it's very mixed, Italians, a few Chinese, Caucasians. There wasn't any one [ethnic group]. I think there were only about three Japanese families in the whole block. So my father wasn't afraid of doing something different and it turned out to be a good thing.

ROBERTS: Like you say a man with great foresight.

KANEMOTO: Right, and I think at that time I didn't think my father was that great, but as an adult looking back, hindsight, I thought he really was gutsy. He did things that the majority of the people didn't do. He removed the family [from the heart of the Japanese community to mainstream].

ROBERTS: Like you said, the store and export and the ice cream shop they were basically patronized by Japanese-Americans or Japanese?

KANEMOTO: I think more than half were. But being the supermarket you catered to the American public.

ROBERTS: Was it like the markets we have today that are like Asian markets or Vietnamese markets?

KANMEOTO: No, it wasn't.



ROBERTS: Just a regular supermarket.

KANEMOTO: Right. So it had the butcher, but then it had an oriental section also, but that was more in the back.

ROBERTS: The prelude to internment. Like you say, being thirteen years old, did you realize when Pearl Harbor was bombed, what had happened? I know this is tough, but for a thirteen-year old what was your understanding of what had happened with the bombing of Pearl Harbor or did you have any at all?

KANEMOTO: I'll have to admit that I was very naive, protected. I didn't really care about the world views. I didn't know anything about Pearl Harbor. I heard it was in Hawaii but at that time I don't think I even knew that they had four major islands. Even to that point we didn't have any relatives in Hawaii so that was really not much of a concern, but we knew this was something serious because of our parents' reaction.

[End Tape 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]



KANEMOTO: We knew that this was something serious because of our parents' reactions.

ROBERTS: So you could feel that?

KANEMOTO: Yes, you could really feel it. I don't know how many months after Pearl Harbor when Singapore fell [February 22, 1942], that was the time my father was picked up at home early in the morning. Just as everyone was getting ready for breakfast and leaving for work there must have been three or four FBI [agents] that came in and [there were a few other Japanese people involved in being searched] but then we were one of them. They [FBI] went through the entire house. My father was immediately treated as a prisoner. Even to go into the restroom a FBI [agent] had to accompany him. They slit all the couches to see if anything was hidden. They even looked into the kids' rooms, but amazingly enough they didn't bother with our piggy banks. We were told if it was the kids' [belongings], well we're Americans and so they won't touch it. But my father was caught with alot money. I think it was about four hundred dollars. In those days that was alot of money. But then my father was



one that went to work at eight-thirty and didn't come home till ten or eleven o'clock in the evening, he would bring home the take of the day from the store. I don't know why. These things were kind of a surprise to me, I didn't know he carried so much cash. Anyway, that alone triggers the suspicion, what is this man doing with so much money? So I remember after this thorough search of the entire house, my father put some things together in a paper shopping bag and he was hauled off with no other warning other than that. It was really a shock. I don't remember whether I went to school or not. I doubt if I did. But the next day when I did go to school some friends greeted me and showed me my father's picture which was in the paper, [front page]. I said oh. I was not a paper person. I wasn't what you call the best student in those days and when I finally did get to see one it was by the Seattle Post Intelligence. There are two papers Seattle Times and the Seattle Post and we took the Seattle Times and so it literally escaped us. So on the front page there was my father, the size of about quarter



of the page. With a shopping bag and with his felt hat on being taken. . . . You know, the picture seemed like some big prize. It really dawned on me, my gosh this is really something. This is kind of celebrity status. [Laughter] I don't think my mind was on any studying. I remember the teachers were very respectful. They didn't pick on me. The students, I don't remember really.

ROBERTS: Were the teachers Asians, Japanese, or Anglos?

KANEMOTO: Anglos. I don't remember them ostracizing us in anyway. Of course the school that I attended, which was several miles away [three miles], kind of merged with the Japanese community. So I would say about twenty or twenty-five percent of the students probably were Asians, that's including the Chinese not only the Japanese. That I can vividly, you know, see where I wasn't ostracized. I didn't feel my father was a bad guy. I knew my father, where he worked. Where he was working nothing was all that confidential. He was out working when he wasn't home, I knew he was working. I knew he wasn't doing anything real bad if he was accountable. [Laughter] So



we're left with my mother who didn't speak too much English. She always trying to be the good mother. I remember she used to continue to enroll in this English class that the PTA [Parents Teacher Association] offered. It was a perpetual thing. We used to laugh in the latter years that "Mom you deserved a PhD because of the amount of time that you spent in these English classes." [Laughter] So she was left with, let's see, myself and two younger brothers, because my [older] brother was already in Japan. The three minors and my mother now we had to--within a month we were told that we had to get rid of all our personal belongings and the house that we owned.

ROBERTS: When was your father exactly, within a month and year, taken away?

KANEMOTO: You know, I can't give you the date but it was tied into with Singapore, falling of Singapore. When Singapore fell, immediately after that my father was picked up. I've never looked it up. I'm sure you can look it up.

ROBERTS: Pearl Harbor was bombed on December [7th] 1941, I think Singapore fell in the later part of 1942, I'd have to check.



KANEMOTO: 1942. It would be early 1942.

ROBERTS: Early 1942. By February of 1942 you weren't in an assembly center or an internment camp?

KANEMOTO: No, I think it was about April that we went to the assembly center. See none of this, I have references but I've never really zeroed down the day, as to what exact date, but it was soon after Pearl Harbor. We knew there were people picked up right after Pearl Harbor. Couple other big groups and I think my father was about the third group that was picked up. By then, this is a funny feeling that you kind of latch on to, because I never felt my father was a bad guy, you feel like, well same with my mother, my mother knew my father was a community leader and it's because he's important. He's an important guy that he's a suspect. You feel like, yea it's because dad is important. You don't internalize the idea it's because he's bad, he did something wrong to the United States. It's just because he's a big guy. You have to have some kind of pride to say that. I think with that, we kind of hung in there. It's a belief that you knew he didn't do anything that you know of that was really bad.



ROBERTS: When they were searching the house and ripping up the sofas, other than shock and I'm sure it's hard to put into exact words, but what were your personal reactions to this? Do you remember any?

KANEMOTO: It was so unreal. I didn't know that it could happen. I remember two people [FBI agents] just slit open the sofa and you know the soft back end part, they would just slit open it with a jack knife. They slit open the fabric to see if anything was hidden there. They moved certain furniture to see if there was anything hidden in the areas. I think my father was searched first and I think when they found the money, of course that really did it. So they continued to search I think they probably thought that maybe all this money was being filtered to Japan at that time, I don't know.

ROBERTS: It was just unreal. Were they polite to you and your mother?

KANEMOTO: I don't think they were cruel or anything. But they went about doing their thing without saying too much. But they certainly kept an eye on my father.



ROBERTS: Was your father allowed to speak to you and your mother before he was taken away?

KANEMOTO: No, not given too much time. They could of taken advantage of speaking in Japanese if they wanted to. I'm sure he said a few things to my mother, but I wasn't there.

ROBERTS: Nothing like don't worry, I'm going to be alright. Where was he taken?

KANEMOTO: He was taken to the immigration office, I noticed, because we went to see him there. Then he was, I think within a month, shipped to Montana where it was higher security. I think within a couple of weeks he was sent there.

ROBERTS: I see. So at immigration, was he kept in a cell?

KANEMOTO: Yes, he was in a cell. Like a prisoner. There were bars when we went to see him, there were bars between us and [him].

ROBERTS: And this was all in Seattle?

KANEMOTO: Uh-huh. That I know. I was there, my mother took the three of us kids and we went to visit him. It couldn't have been more than two weeks.

ROBERTS: Two weeks that he was at the immigration?

KANEMOTO: No, no. Yes, that's right. And he was shipped then to [Missoula] Montana.



ROBERTS: And so were you guys allowed to see him everyday?

KANEMOTO: I don't remember seeing him that often.

ROBERTS: Did he know if he was going to be shipped to Montana?

KANEMOTO: No.

ROBERTS: He didn't know. It was just one day and then you're shipped to Montana, high-security risk. I see. Do you remember how you felt and what she said at the time explaining [why] your father had been shipped to Montana and obviously you're not going to be able to see him?

KANEMOTO: Oh, she was just as stunned too, so she really couldn't say much. None of us knew what was happening. You couldn't even ask your friends because we're one of the more victimized ones. So you really couldn't even ask your best friend because there weren't too many people that were being treated the same. My uncle, like I said, he had a severe stroke, he was crippled and he couldn't really help our family. He lived a few miles away in Seattle, but I know we never depended on him. When we left we just didn't know what the next move was. We knew some kind



of order would come. That was the executive order [Executive Order 9066], you know, that we would have to be evacuated ourselves.

ROBERTS: So he was in prison before Executive Order 9066?

KANEMOTO: Right, right. Because, like I said, he was one of the high-risk people. . .

ROBERTS: . . . because of his ties to Japan and like you say maybe. . .

KANEMOTO: . . . a community leader. The consolation to us was because he was a community leader they have to put the blame or something on somebody and so they will be investigated and he will be released. But then when he moved on and not released, he was moved on to Montana we really didn't know how far that was, but we knew it was somewhere else other than Washington. We knew we would not be seeing him and we were resigned to the fact, okay he's gone.

ROBERTS: Do you know how your mom did find out? Did your dad notify her or the FBI?

KANEMOTO: I'm sure she was told.

ROBERTS: By the FBI or your father?



KANEMOTO: I don't remember. I'm sure the agency told her. Now when we got the notice to be evacuated that was a problem because my mother was so dependent on my father. If we had any major thing he would send someone to help her with the gardening or to do any heavy duty [work]. [We often had school boys living with us.] He would always send someone over. Here my mother was left, so it was a tough time, because I think you couldn't even depend on the other Japanese, because they were preoccupied with their own personal affairs.

ROBERTS: So when the Executive Order came down and everyone basically knew that they were going to have to go somewhere or something was going to happen. Were you aware of this at the time?

KANEMOTO: Right. I learned that we would have to be sent somewhere, then it happened to be at the county fair. Which was the Puyallup Fairgrounds. Later on we were told they were making a more permanent place out in the east, until then it's going to be a temporary assembly center. It was a makeshift place.

ROBERTS: It seemed like all the assembly centers. . .



KANEMOTO: . . . Right, they had to do it, put it together among themselves. For the more permanent it was not too much better but I mean it took awhile to clear the land and put all that plumbing and everything else in there.

ROBERTS: Now your own personal belongings, do you remember what happened to those?

KANEMOTO: A lot of it was lost. I had one good Caucasian friend. . . . Let's see now, when I went into junior high school, being I was not the best of students, I remember my father or my parents bought me a stationery, it was a desk with all the orderly drawers. They bought it by saying you're a big girl, you're going to junior high for your studies, so study hard. I think at that time it was called a stationery, and I gave this to my Caucasian friend [Margaret Thompson], who lived about four blocks away. She said she would use it in memory and give it back to me when I got back to Seattle. Of course, I never saw it again. I heard that she became mentally ill and I just lost track. I never did get in touch with her. I remember my piano went down the sidewalks



for about fifteen dollars, it was a beautiful mahogany piano. It was upright. It was no grand piano. My father being in the export-import business he had a lot of these sample dishes that he would get. If they weren't something he wanted to sell he would bring them home, so my mother had quite a collection of dishes. Asian things were not popular during the war time, so you practically had to give them away. I don't remember what the take was. Anyway, they were practically all given away. The rest of it I really don't know what happened. I know my father's car, business, everything was confiscated [by Alien Property Custodians].

ROBERTS: Oh, it was.

KANEMOTO: Oh yes. Even the market.

ROBERTS: Even though it was in this gentleman's name?

KANEMOTO: Right, right. Because it was . . .

ROBERTS: . . . being run by your father.

KANEMOTO: Right, right.

ROBERTS: That's interesting.

KANEMOTO: See, even the family cars were all bought by the company. My father was one who probably had a wage but instead of putting it into his personal



account, because he couldn't get any loan, he recycled everything, his personal account, and put it back into the business. So by the time the war came he really had nothing. Everything was confiscated. As big as he was, he was down to zilch, nothing.

ROBERTS: So the government came in and took this, you didn't have to worry about people coming in and trying to buy your house for ten cents on the dollar. They confiscated the house also?

KANEMOTO: Not the house. The house was eventually sold. I heard that the equity was very little on it, only about two or three thousand in those days but was still some, but it was in my cousin's name, paid for by my father's money. But apparently [my cousin George] did get that couple thousand dollars when they sold the house.

ROBERTS: But they came in with the supermarket and the export business, they just confiscated everything inside?

KANEMOTO: Right, right.

ROBERTS: I see. That was never sold and the money given to your father or anybody?



KANEMOTO: No, no. My father was an alien and definitely he was part of the business.

ROBERTS: That's kind of interesting.

KANEMOTO: Yes, the title was just my cousin. It wasn't that he owned any part of the capital.

ROBERTS: Do you remember actually getting ready to go to be interned? What you took? What was important to you? What were you thinking at the time?

KANEMOTO: Well, we were told we had a limit on two suitcases. It's kind of exciting to have a brand-new suitcase out of the deal. [Laughter]

ROBERTS: That's kind of ironic.

KANEMOTO: Yea, isn't it ironic. This is a kid's mind. Of course we all carefully chose the largest suitcase. If it was two, it's two whether it's big or small. I remember we bought the biggest suitcase that was on the market. We could hardly carry it. Anyway, that's the way we went. I remember it wasn't the most expensive. But I think as kids we kind of took it as going off to camp, because my brothers had some experience in going to some kind of summer camp. So it was more of a fun excitement kind of a thing.

ROBERTS: An adventure.



KANEMOTO: An adventure. I don't remember them taking us and crying uncontrollably or anything like that.

ROBERTS: Do you remember if you were fearful, anxious, worried?

KANEMOTO: Well, we didn't know because see it's everyone. We're told that it's all Japanese. . . .

[Interruption]

KANEMOTO: Let me see, where were we now?

ROBERTS: Feelings, fear, anxious, anxiety, regarding going there.

KANEMOTO: To camp?

ROBERTS: Yes, to camp.

KANEMOTO: Okay, this is the assembly center, right.

ROBERTS: Uh-huh.

KANEMOTO: No, not really because we were going to be all put into the same place, now you have to remember this is a kid's mind. I wasn't what you call a highly motivated student. I know my parents wanted me to be a little bit better. I was going to be with my friends, they were all going to go there, we knew that. The employees from my father's stores, I mean they were going to be close by and we kind of took them as part of the family, so it wasn't with real sadness.  
[ . I knew there were a



few fathers who were picked up, so I knew we had no control of the situation. I kind of went along, kind of like a sheep I guess.

ROBERTS: Do you remember any interaction or talking between you and your friends or you and your brothers about what is going on?

KANEMOTO: No, not too much. I was thumbing through some of this [School Annual], these autographs that my friends wrote. Some do say well I'm sorry you're leaving. I hope we will see each other sometime in the future. But no, I think even America never experienced such a thing and so if you really had a bomb dropped right in front of you you could see the disaster, but you don't see any devastation, so, no, as a kid, I don't remember.

ROBERTS: How was your mom doing? Was she handling everything? Worried?

KANEMOTO: I'm sure she was worried. Helpless, because here she was not involved in the business end.

ROBERTS: So did she sell the house or did someone come and help her?

KANEMOTO: I really don't know what happened. I don't remember. A lot of it was bought through the



courtesy of the business, like I said even the passenger car, I think at that time we had an Oldsmobile.

ROBERTS: Do you remember your reaction going into this assembly center?

KANEMOTO: Into the assembly center. Well, I did get the reaction that it was kind of humble. We were assigned or given the barrack assignment, it was truly just one thin plank of wood that partitioned the different families and to the outside. Because it was obviously made with pine wood the knots would fall out and there would be holes in it. Even the lock was not a real heavy, secure kind of a lock.

ROBERTS: Was it finished? Were there rooms? Because some people I've talked to have said they actually had to put up walls themselves or put a roof on because they weren't completely finished.

KANEMOTO: Well, it was a partition between the different families, not to the ceiling, it came just let's see maybe two feet beyond your height. So if you're talking everything could bounce into the next room. I remember the roof too, it was just tar paper over a piece of wood. Of course



when you look back on it, it was really a real temporary thing. It was maybe two months.

ROBERTS: That's how long you spent there, two months.

KANEMOTO: Yes, two months. Two or three months at the most I think.

ROBERTS: Big community kitchen?

KANEMOTO: We went to a mess hall, Army style. I'm sure the bathrooms and laundry rooms were all community. I have a copy of my assembly center newsletter, I'll put my hands on it and try to get it to you, a copy of it, because I don't think there are too many floating around.

ROBERTS: . . . Is it for this camp that you were at?

KANEMOTO: Puyallup. I think one of my cousins, not this cousin, but another artist cousin [Ed Tsutakawa] did the graphics on it, so I thought that was interesting.

[End Tape 1, Side B]

[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

ROBERTS: What stuck out in your mind, I don't know if you were allowed to bring certain favorite toys with you?

KANEMOTO: It was very limited, very limited.



ROBERTS: Do you remember what you did? How you spent your spare time?

KANEMOTO: Gee, I really don't know. I knew how rugged it was, I mean nothing was paved and so when it rained of course the ground was muddy, it's like stomped-on grass. School, there was none, because they said it was temporary. They said April, May, June probably and then they said well there's no school anyway. I don't remember what we really did. I think alot of the women were doing handiwork, like knitting, things like that. I remember I joined in and I learned alot. If anything that's what I learned, and I was able to make a few sweaters. Something I kind of mastered at that time for my age [fourteen] I made a ski sweater. I remember they made a comment on that. I still have it. [Laughter]

ROBERTS: Any contact from your father while he's in Montana?

KANEMOTO: No, not at all, not at all.

ROBERTS: Then when you find out that you're actually going to go to an internment camp, did you really understand the difference between the assembly center and going to an internment camp and what internment in itself involved?



KANEMOTO: I had no idea, we were just herded like sheep. I remember we were on a train, it wasn't first class by any means, I didn't expect it to be. I remember we did have to draw shades and then we traveled by night I think it was.

ROBERTS: Draw the shades?

KANEMOTO: You know the blinds.

ROBERTS: How come?

KANEMOTO: They didn't want us to see what areas we were traveling [through]. I remember that very emphatically. They told us draw your shade and don't lift it. Of course, there were MPs [Military police] at both ends of the boxcar.

ROBERTS: You were transported in a boxcar?

KANEMOTO: Well, it wasn't private lines by any means, coach kind of sit down. Families kind of sat together, but you see at both ends, MP's. They're low rank PFC's [Private First Class] or private or whatever. They were there with guns. But then I don't remember being scared or anything.

ROBERTS: They weren't intimidating or vicious or cruel?



KANEMOTO: No, no. But when you look at it from the outside I would think yes this is certainly. . . . When you say MP, well that's serious. But there's so many of us, hundreds and thousands of us, so I mean I wasn't scared, no I don't think so. It was rather strange. It was an experience. I keep it as an experience. I can't use another word.

ROBERTS: I don't know if this has been your instance, but a couple people I've talk to, actually left from regular train stations, were you taken to a train station and then boarded a train and left?

KANEMOTO: I do not have any memories of that.

ROBERTS: So you wouldn't remember if there were any reactions in the train station or not. Do you remember your reaction to the internment camp itself once you got there?

KANEMOTO: Oh, it was a lonely desert. Nothing surrounded it. It was the starkness of it all was kind of frightening.

ROBERTS: And what camp?

KANEMOTO: I was in Idaho, Minidoka was the camp there. I thought, gee, this is another world. It's like going to another planet, by today's standards, it's like going to another planet. Because it



so barren, it was a desert. And then I think it really sinks in, when you say that you are being removed to another area.

ROBERTS: Well, compared with Seattle. Seattle's so green.

KANEMOTO: Exactly. Even Puyallup had green. It had lawn. The surface that we were walking on, it had grass. We could see buildings around us, but when we came to this other camp in Minidoka it was really desert. No skyscrapers whatsoever, no concrete buildings because whatever structures were there they were barracks, built for us. I think that made more of an impact than going to Puyallup.

ROBERTS: The actual internment camp itself. Now did your mom work at all in the internment camp?

KANEMOTO: No, she didn't if I remember correctly. She didn't because with three minors and she never did work a day in Seattle.

ROBERTS: So you basically lead quite a middle-class life up until this time.

KANEMOTO: Right, I really appreciate it. At that time, when living you don't really care you're just born into it, but then because of that and then going to Japan the first few years there, that



was devastating. Everything was torn due to the war, so it was really an experience. Which I could not blame my parents. So even if you have this anger or fear, you have no one to blame, nor direct it at. It was a funny feeling. Just like a hurricane or a tornado you have this great helplessness. Man cannot control it.

ROBERTS: Right, like the fire in Oakland. There's nothing you can do about it, terrible. Do you remember anything from the internment camp itself? What you did? What any of your activities were? Were you allowed to go to school then after the summer was over with?

KANEMOTO: Yes, in the fall they did promise us there will be school. So I guess what we did was move into the camp during the hot summer, and then in September that was the goal to start school on time. I was an entering freshman. We were able to pick our classes. I remember there were core classes which was something that you had to take like English, History, and Math and then a couple of electives. But then again you're with your familiar friends again, many of them that you knew in the Seattle area, so it wasn't what



you call lonely, lonely socially. If you go there you're seeing your friends. At that age we're not talking about world news. So it wasn't that bad.

ROBERTS: Do you remember any conversations between you and your friends like, what is going to happen to us, what's going on, are we ever going to get out of here?

KANEMOTO: In a way I don't think we even asked that because even if you asked them they're in the same boat as you are. What advantage I had was I hung around with some older people, actually people who were in the work force and they were now unemployed, I mean from work, they were sitting around doing handiwork. That was the time again of the knitting circle. These are people twenty years older than I was, but they were there and I just kind of hung around with them, my mother did too, I went with her. We spent alot of time doing that kind of thing, handiwork. You didn't have alot of household chores because you only had this one bedroom house and you didn't have to prepare your meals, so you don't have to go shopping. Your jobs,



your duties, or necessary work is all taken away, right?

ROBERTS: Right, alot of time on hand.

KANEMOTO: Right, alot of time on your hands. Then again, this is the first year, I was there only about a year fifteen months or so, because I spent sometime at the assembly center, then to camp and then fifteen months later my parents decided to repatriate. See my experience in camp was just a little over a year and that was it.

ROBERTS: Do you remember exactly the sleeping accommodations and there was a stove in there I'm assuming for heat?

KANEMOTO: It was a pot-belly stove and cots. We were all issued one and I remember we were issued army blankets and that was one thing that we were told besides our two suitcases we didn't have to take care of our bedding, because that would be provided. That was it. So you had your cot. There was a mattress, blanket, and then the pot-belly stove I don't think anything else was provided.

ROBERTS: That was it?

KANEMOTO: That was it, basically.



ROBERTS: No medical problems with anyone in your family where they had to go to . . .

KANEMOTO: . . . No, fortunately we didn't have any medical problems.

ROBERTS: So you had the community kitchen. Now did you or your mother have to help with the preparation of food or was that taken care of by the government?

KANEMOTO: You were taken care of by the government. And we were minors, so the kids were never involved in any duties. I don't remember my mother being asked. I know people were beginning to get jobs but again there's so many people. The younger ones had more priority and freedom to get the jobs. I don't ever remember my mother working. I heard about the low pay, what was it twelve dollars, or sixteen dollars?.

ROBERTS: Yes, twelve and sixteen, semi-skilled and skilled.

KANEMOTO: But I don't remember us being involved in that.

ROBERTS: Do you remember ever--now I know they had mail order and I think the allowance was \$10.50 a month or something--do you remember ever going shopping through a mail order? Do you remember ever getting anything?



KANEMOTO: Yea, I think maybe we might have gone out to shop once. You're taken in a bus, but I think we might have bought mail order. It was the Sears or Montgomery Wards [catalogs]. But not too much.

ROBERTS: So you were actually allowed to leave the camp and go into a local town.

KANEMOTO: I think so, I think we were. I have very little recollection. It was not an important thing. Before we went to camp, of course we had the opportunity to prepare and start out with kind of new clothes, if it had to be. Within the first year I don't think there was any real need and everybody else was in the same boat and so you didn't have competition, trying to dress . . .

ROBERTS: LA Gears.

KANEMOTO: Right, right. We didn't have that problem.

ROBERTS: Any contact from your father at all during the time being interned?

KANEMOTO: I think we eventually got hooked up, there's a void I do not know how. But we did learn that he was in Montana, it may be silly, but I still remember he wrote and of course the letters were all censored, blacked-out.



ROBERTS: Did he write in Japanese?

KANEMOTO: Yes, he wrote in Japanese to my mother, because I think they had a limit. I remember he requested his violin saying that there were some prisoners of war at the same camp in Montana from Italy, some shipman, from some cruise, some Italians were in the same camp and there were some musicians and he wanted his violin. My father was, what do you call it, self-taught person and then again he was saying that there were some other Japanese men who played the flute [Shakuhacki]. Of course, they were, I'm sure stuck with alot of idle time, so there were some men who wanted to perfect the Japanese flute. Then he was writing music for the violin to compliment the flute. So you see again, that shows where he was different. He would find creative things to do that was different.

ROBERTS: He tried to make the best out of it.

KANEMOTO: Yes, he did. I was not surprised as I look back on it now, that that's what he did. Somehow I think we did get the violin to him. I don't know if this happened before we left, it must have happened before we left Seattle otherwise I



don't think we would have counted that as one suitcase.

ROBERTS: Right.

KANEMOTO: I don't think we would have. I still have that violin.

ROBERTS: Oh, do you.

KANEMOTO: Yes, my second daughter has it because she ended up playing the violin, not that violin. Now it's a heirloom. Now it's an antique.

ROBERTS: It's always nice to have heirlooms and traditions.

KANEMOTO: Well, yes. I'm not one to buy antiques, but if it belongs in your family I think it means alot.

ROBERTS: So your father was actually in a prisoner-of-war camp, then?

KANEMOTO: Well, he was in with those same groups of people. These were people, from what I understand, Italian musicians who were on these cruise ships you see, who were picked up in the Atlantic or Pacific, I don't know. They were all sent there too and that's where he met these fellows. I guess they were able to mingle and my father was not a shy man, I mean he would be first to speak up and exchange conversation.  
[Laughter]



ROBERTS: Right, you've got to admire that.

KANEMOTO: Right, I do, I do. He was different. [Laughter]

ROBERTS: Different but in a nice way. Sometimes when you say different the interpreter thinks a little strange. Do you remember the name of the camp he was in?

KANEMOTO: Ah, it was in Missoula, Montana.

ROBERTS: Oh, okay.

KANEMOTO: Okay, then he was there barely a year. Then he was sent to Lordsburg, New Mexico. I don't know if you've come across that town, but there were several Japanese sent there. This was, I understand, even higher security. Meaning the people, I think, in Montana were kind of cleared, investigated and some were sent home [to relocation camps]. Whether they were going to close that camp I don't know. But then my father was sent to another one meaning I guess they're not ready to let him go. So he was sent to prison. What an extreme, from Montana to New Mexico.

ROBERTS: And from Seattle even.



KANEMOTO: I know. Can you imagine the cost that our government went through so needlessly. Anyway, he was there for a few months and then that was when we heard about repatriation. My father, by then, had already signed, I think in Missoula, Montana for repatriation, meaning he wanted to go back to Japan on an exchange ship. And I think that kind of triggers the idea that he is a high-risk security, because he still has interest in Japan. There was talk about Crystal City, Texas where the family could join him, but he was paroled back to Idaho to join us.

ROBERTS: Before you actually left for Japan?

KANEMOTO: Uh-huh.

ROBERTS: Now was the decision to go to Japan strictly his or do you know if he was forced or pressured?

KANEMOTO: You know how it is when you apply for something, okay and then in the meantime while you're living your everyday [life] he was paroled back to camp, sent to Idaho. I think he was only [there] about two months, then [the government] said you are now chosen, do you want to repatriate, want to exercise your repatriation? You have applied for it, you have the chance.



ROBERTS: So he had the right to say no.

KANEMOTO: Right, right.

ROBERTS: He could probably go to Crystal City, I see.

KANEMOTO: So he was with us, he was released. They couldn't find anything on him, so he was released to come back to Idaho and live with us as a family. Of course, my mom was relieved and just to be together is an accomplishment in itself. We were separated for about eighteen months there, through the assembly center time and then Idaho time and he made the circle and came back. Then one day when it happened, it happened so quickly within a week saying do you or don't you want to [repatriate]. I remember we just talked and my father pleaded saying "Well, at least we'll all be together." He said, "You know your brother is in Japan." We signed for this. We have grandmas on both sides. This is the only way to be together. He never said that he knew that one would win the war, that was not it. He was a family-oriented man. So I remember it happened so quickly and before we knew it, again we were packing and taking off through New Jersey. We took off from New Jersey on this



prisoner exchange ship. From what I understand it was the second exchange ship during the heat of the war. Our was Gripsholm, the Swedish liner, that was painted all white and blue, but then it had a blue cross on it. It's not a red cross but a blue cross meaning it's a peaceful [neutral ship] because it's a Swedish ship. So we went down to Rio De Janeiro to Montevideo, Venezuela and then [to Goa, India where the exchange took place]. Sailing around the Cape of Good Hope to Singapore, Manila and then to Japan. It was a round-about way, but anyway that again was another experience. [The prisoners were exchanged at Goa, India.]

ROBERTS: Sure. [Laughter] I can imagine.

KANEMOTO: By then I was fifteen. I still had no control over the situation and as my autograph book will say, the trend said well they're sorry to see. . . . The future's unknown. When are we going to meet again, a big question mark. No one knew.

ROBERTS: Do you remember how you found out that your father was coming? Did your mom know beforehand that your father was coming back from New Mexico to be with you?



KANEMOTO: It was all of a sudden. He just showed up.

ROBERTS: Do you remember, other than being elated to see your father, your feelings that you were going through at the time when you first saw him? And questions that might have arose in your mind as to what's going on and what's going to happen?

KANEMOTO: No, I don't think I was thinking on that . . . . Mainly, I think I still felt well that's good, I'll be taken care of. Don't have to worry. At least we were never hungry, because the government fed us, right. We had a cot to sleep on. The family was there. It was a step better, now that the family was together. For that matter, my father was a controlling person, so I felt in this one room. . . . He was a very verbal person. So again, in the one room, no privacy. It was kind of close quarters to be with your father who is domineering. [Laughter] That stuck with me, as I have to shape up. [Laughter] My mother was much more easier, so I wasn't afraid of her. My father was the one who actually told me how to sit, how to eat, and all those things. [Laughter]

ROBERTS: My mom and dad are the same way.



KANEMOTO: Oh, okay. I'm really reliving it, but that's exactly where I was. I thought gee, great dad is coming back, but I have to shape up. This is the kind of thought that comes back saying you got away with certain things.

ROBERTS: Because your father wasn't there.

KANEMOTO: Exactly. He kind of tried to shape us back up. My father would be more used to the American ways. He was the one who tried to teach my mother manners, this is the way it's done in America. He always tried to fit into the American way. He was the one, even table manners. He would be the one to say, this is the way and he would go to restaurants, he was not afraid to ask how the food was prepared, what is it called. He came home and repeated the same thing. Try to do things, you know. He was one who was always on the move.

ROBERTS: So when he comes back, the feeling is that I have to get it together here, because he's coming back?

KANEMOTO: Exactly. It was kind of nice, but then you knew that teenage rebellion period. I am sorry, but you wanted to know the truth. That's where I was.



ROBERTS: I know it would be the same way if it was me. My mother would sit there and it would be more relaxed atmosphere. If my dad was there, it's like okay time to start doing everything the way you're suppose to do. I can relate to that. It's an interesting perspective.

KANEMOTO: Okay, well I'm glad you accept it, because you might say well you're strange. [Laughter]

ROBERTS: Do you remember anything about the voyage or the ship? It must have been quit long?

KANEMOTO: It was eighty-five days. Again, it was an experience. I wouldn't say it was exciting, but it was kind of scary. Again, it's funny how you dig up a little hope saying "Gee this is with the privileged lot." This is the ship that [Japanese ambassador] Kurusu, the ambassador had gone back [on], a few months earlier. We had a nice cabin. The oceanliner was just beautiful. We had waiters assigned to us. We ate first-class. I mean the food was abundant. I mean coming from camp, it was slop on a tray, everything on a tray. Here we had to use linen napkins, it was just very formal. We were treated very well. But then the shock of it was



when we actually did exchange in Goa, India, that was the time when we got on the Japanese Teia Maru, it's there, the name of the ship. It was the complete opposite. From the first meal, we would notice worms in the rice, worms in the bread that they had baked on the ship.

ROBERTS: Was it a cruise liner also?

KANEMOTO: It was not a cruise liner. Actually I think it was a freighter. It was not anything deluxe. The flour that they made the bread from I think was infested with worms. You look at the bread and see little black dots, well the black dots happened to be the heads of white worms. Once you recognize that, being that age you're kind of critical looking and examining, and then you identify that it's worms, it just turns you off. Those were the things that were major. I'd rather starve than eat this, because after all we had pretty nice treatment on the Gripsholm. I remember everything else was so humble or meager.

ROBERTS: Comparable to camp then.



KANEMOTO: Worst than camp. In camp it was at least American GI issued. It's abundant. Maybe heavy on the starches, but still you are not hungry and you have no worms. It's not contaminated. Even if it's meat, it's a hunk of meat that you can identify. We had very little protein on the ship, I remember. But then again you have to remember Japan was at war for several years already and they were really. . . .

ROBERTS: Right. What year was this now, roughly?

KANEMOTO: '43. Late '43. We had gone on in October of '43. Then arrived December of '43. From the first day, the first meal, we knew that there was a change. Of course, I think my father really knew this was a mistake, because he didn't know either. He got us into this. He truly did get us into it. If he had refused as far as coming or repatriating, I think he could have. . . . And for that reason, you probably know, that the redress right now, I and my two brothers don't qualify for it. One because we "repatriated," it was in that little gray fine print. [This bill excludes from eligibility, ". . . individuals who, during the period beginning December 7,



1941, and ending on September 2, 1945, relocated to a country while the United States was at war with that country."]

ROBERTS: Even though you were a minor?

KANEMOTO: Exactly. That's something I think that by American law it seems unfair, because I was a citizen, denied of my civil rights. I had never signed anything. It was my parents who kind of, you know. [Pause] I think how lucky I am. I think those hardships are the things that kind of made me a better person. Because after I came back, the story changes, I did buckle down and became a professional nurse. I think you just have a turning point and it came at a good time because my rebellion was over, I could not turn it against my parents either, because they didn't know what they were facing.

ROBERTS: I don't know if your father told you or how you found out you were going to go back or go to Japan, not even back because you weren't even born from there, but go to Japan? And your reaction to finding out you were going to Japan?

KANEMOTO: Okay, in 1937 we were there at one time, when my brother was left and then we all went back [to



the United States]. So to go back, soon as we went back the second time we noticed the difference, because when we went back in 1937, my mother had maids in the country home and the exchange rate was three hundred and sixty to one. The money talked, our American money talked. You could just about buy anything with money. But then this time, well we didn't have the money, but money did not buy because there just wasn't anything to buy. So I remember the first year I was in Japan after "repatriating," of course I was in the high school age group, I enrolled in the Japanese Girl's high school. It was still, what do you call, separated boys/girls, our high school was a girl's high school. I wasn't accomplished, I didn't have the mastery of the Japanese language, but never the less they accepted me. It was hard. The winter was much more severe. I mean you don't have indoor heating, so there you are. Limited clothes, because after all you had was just your two suitcases, they had to provide your year-round clothes. The education part of it was difficult. Physically, I think was really



hard. Where we had to do alot of manual exercises, of course Japan is living in a militarily controlled environment, so we have to strip down, meaning strip down to your short-sleeve in the cold freezing weather. Wear a bandanna, strip and then we were given bamboo sticks and we were told to drill in case the Americans came. All this and what would you do. It was kind of like the mechanical type of action that you go through. But then these are all puppetry, because they call the commands and then you have to strike [with the bamboo stick]. So you're part of the group again and you're just going through the motion.

[End Tape 2, Side A]

[Begin Tape 2, Side B]

KANEMOTO: Something different at this time I didn't have the friends, people to share with. Your classmates are all new people, you don't have the friends, good friends that you're familiar with. Your parents, you know, are going through a hard time [pause] and [Inaudible].

ROBERTS: Any animosity directed towards you because you are an American citizen?



KANEMOTO: Okay, as a survival Debbie, you'll have to accept the fact that we would have to say "No we came back because we trusted that the Japanese government will take care of us, will succeed." Now we're in Japan, we have to kind of live as it's a survival. If we said, "Oh, hey you're going to lose the war, I mean America has so much more material things, they're just starting and here you people are so war-torn after so many years of war with China." They had so little wares in the stores, I guess just like Russia right now, the stores are empty. The food, everything is on rations. So even if you had the money you couldn't buy it.

ROBERTS: So even though you were an United States' citizen, as long as you have the mind set that Japan was going to triumph. . . .

KANEMOTO: Well, that's what you tell them, but you know already from your personal experience that they're not. Because you know from the food, the resources of the materials that they have they're not going to. And then of course, you're dual citizens, that's why we say okay . . .

ROBERTS: . . . okay, you want them to win. I see.



KANEMOTO: That's kind of the comfortable thing that you're brought up with, once you're a Japanese, no matter where you're born, the native country has always offered you the citizenship rights. So it's kind of a good feeling because even to the parents, you see, saying "Well, isn't that nice my kids are Japanese and forever more they will be, because they are of Japanese blood." It was not a birth right, well it's a birth right in a way but it's the kind of thinking that they give you. You are Japanese, so if you want it it's there for you. You're always a Japanese. Once you're a Japanese you're always a Japanese. You can take it, however you want to.

ROBERTS: So it's kind of a role that you played over there?

KANEMOTO: Right, exactly. What can you do?

ROBERTS: Oh yea, no . . .

KANEMOTO: . . . what can you do? It's a survival thing. So you have to kind of play the game, play the game. I found my father just suffered so. Because once the war was over, after all this starvation and I came down with pleurisy. I remember all my classmates were now going on to



the war effort, this is in the high school level, so let's say sophomore year, they're all going to factories. When I was able to go back to school, they knew that was physically too hard, so a few of us assembled at the school and my job was to sew buttons on uniforms. You see, they gave some small quiet kind of job to do. But I remember when I had pleurisy, my mother came in one day, she found an egg, bought it, I'm sure black-market or whatever. She had it in a towel. She brought this egg as if it was some gold. Wanted me to eat it and you know when you're sick you don't feel like eating this gold. [Laughter] But that's how far we went down.

ROBERTS: So you were really affected then by the economy?

KANEMOTO: Oh yea. Right, right. You know, you go back knowing those lean years you really appreciate what you have today. I'm sure my kids will have a hard time comprehending this.

ROBERTS: I'm reading an author who thinks all kids should suffer hardships.



KANEMOTO: Yes. It's too bad. In my case, I couldn't blame anybody, so again in natural disaster, you still can't blame anybody. You know, some people keep blaming their parents for certain things like child abuse. When you do that, it's kind of sad, because you have that bitterness and create that hurt feeling. See in our case, well I guess the bigger person you blame is the government, the ignorance and hysteria. That's why I think this is why it's now coming to a head for collecting all this data to see why we feel this way. But when you're in the heat of times you can't see it, but when you go back with hindsight, and history, I think the value there is that history will tell you that with a little bit more rationalization . . .

ROBERTS: . . . you might learn by past mistakes.

KANEMOTO: Exactly. That's what I'm saying my history is different. It's very good in some [ways] [Laughter]. I mentioned the Gripsholm letter, I can give you one of these. My father wrote to his brother. Remember I said that he had a crippled brother with a severe stroke at the age of thirty-seven, so he wrote to the camp, this



is the war-relocation camp, and this was his room number, and it was sent from the Gripsholm and never got to my uncle. See my father wrote it on the Gripsholm, he sent it to my uncle who was still in the Idaho camp and never reached him and then he died, subsequently. But the funny thing is only a few years back, about five years now, the cousin's friend ran across this letter and gave it to him. It makes me so angry to think that these U.S. mail could be confiscated or diverted for personal [gain], some collector had it.

ROBERTS: Oh, you're kidding.

KANEMOTO: So, of course, I don't have the original because my cousin has it, because it circled around after forty years, saying that somebody had it. They thought my father was connected to Tsutakawa, there aren't that many same surnames. So someone said, are you related to this person, because he's an internationally known [artist], are you connected to this person. This is why it ended up in his hands and then I got a copy of it. Of course, it's the last letter that my father wrote to his brother, never got there,



but it came in hands of some collector. Isn't that something? I don't know if you want to keep this. I had it. I made a few copies of it.

ROBERTS: That is weird. I wonder if it was confiscated then or maybe got lost and someone found it and said well this isn't that important anyway, and just kept it.

KANEMOTO: I don't know.

ROBERTS: It's interesting though.

KANEMOTO: It is interesting. But the contents states he's on the ship, this is on the Gripsholm, saying he's being well-treated and don't worry. This is after all a letter to his sick brother, so he's saying everything will be okay. It was more a comforting letter to a sick brother. Then it turns out to be that he never got it, he died. That's the sad part of it.

ROBERTS: Was his brother taken to the same camp?

KANEMOTO: See he wasn't touched [by the FBI] because he was so crippled with the stroke.

ROBERTS: I see. So he didn't have to go to internment?

KANEMOTO: He went to Idaho camp, he was taken as an invalid. Yes, he was one of us. He was taken as a sick person. It wasn't contagious, so he went



with the mass. I understand that people in the sanitariums, if you had TB [Tuberculous], yes they did stay in Weimar, California, it was here, locally. I understand they put barb-wires around Weimar, which I was surprised. I only learned that through the oral history project.

ROBERTS: Did you have barbed-wire around your camp?

KANEMOTO: Oh yes. Oh, yes.

ROBERTS: Did it strike you then, even?

KANEMOTO: Well, I think the first visual record is to see how lonely or in no man's country, that was the shocking thing. Beyond that nothing could have surpassed, because we already were being accompanied by MP's on the train, so we knew we were being treated as prisoners. There was some very high security. I was just looking for some barbed-wire pictures, if there were any, yes. This is not a picture book, but these are like most annals. Of course, this is fifty years ago. [Laughter] It's very precious. I'm in the freshman class and my brother's in the eighth grade class. [Looking at the Hunt High School Annual, 1943]

ROBERTS: What grades were you in?



KANEMOTO: High school [Ninth grade].

ROBERTS: This is strictly up to you, if you want we can quit now and I can go home and go through all this and then contact you or if you feel like continuing, we can continue. I don't know if you have something planned today and you need to quit.

KANEMOTO: If you're not tired.

ROBERTS: No, no. I just didn't want to take too much of your time.

KANEMOTO: Can I offer you coffee or soda?

ROBERTS: I'll take a glass of water, please.

KANEMOTO: Water? that's it. Okay. [Pause in conversation]

ROBERTS: I think that the trouble with some of these kids now a days, so much is handed to them almost, they don't have to work for things, so they don't appreciate it.

KANEMOTO: Well, then I think we're the ones who are at fault.

ROBERTS: Oh sure, because we give it all to them.

KANEMOTO: Right. Because we don't want them to go through the hardship that we've gone through. Same with my kids, mine are probably alot older than you are because they are all out of the UC



[University of California] system. It's hard.  
You try to give them what you can. Some of them  
take it for something that's natural. [Laughter]  
They're kind of living the Yuppie life.  
[Laughter]

ROBERTS: Oh yea, I know.

KANEMOTO: But what you have, you want to share.

ROBERTS: You don't want them to experience all those  
hardships.

KANEMOTO: I think so. You know it's your fault. You're  
doing it to them. It's kind of too bad.

ROBERTS: Okay, so we left you arriving in Japan and this  
role you're playing, so not to alienate yourself  
from the other Japanese. Can you describe a  
little bit about the starvation, you briefly  
described the conditions when you arrived and at  
the end of the war in 1945?

KANEMOTO: I was still living in Okayama, this is my  
father's main homestead. Let me see, there's so  
much that I hate to even call it a story. It's  
so much, it's kind of like garbage. I'll sort it  
out for what it's worth. Okay, we were living  
in the main home, which is the main Tsutakawa  
home. Because the oldest brother, my father's



oldest brother was twenty years older, he had a very big business in the corporate area, in shipping, the export-import kind of ties. His house got burned. He had a mansion in Kobe, but then it was bombed. He had to evacuate and come back [to the country], the old homestead, in Okayama, this is next to Hiroshima. So he brought his family, the kids, grandkids, and his wife were first to come back, so we were living together. Then he eventually came back into the country to live, but then of course, the old man, my father's oldest brother and he couldn't get along. See unfortunately, the first son is always like the father being the master. The first son is the one that takes over next. There's so much assumed roles that you have to take. My father was really uncomfortable and he knew better not to say anything. If you didn't like it you get out. But at the time of war, you could not get out because there's no place to turn to. It's not as if he came back with any money, he came back with zero, nothing. Again, he did find a home up in the mountain that was deserted, a make-shift shack that he bought for



a nominal amount of money. He brought it down piece by piece. You could not buy lumber during the war. He tore it apart and brought it down to the small property, because my father was the fifth son he got a portion of the land [about two acres]. That's where he brought the piece by piece lumber and built the house for us. He was happy. He felt pretty good with himself then. I remember he was bartering with a suitcase and trying to buy a little pot to heat our hands. It's called a hibachi. But he would barter. The suitcase meant nothing during the war, it served its purpose. For some Japanese then, if it was made in America, oh it's an American suitcase with leather trimming. So there was some gullible people that would exchange the items with you. That's how my father managed to build a house for us during the war time. So we did live about three houses away from my father's oldest brother. Well to buy even the kitchen ware, pots and pans, I mean those were things you could not buy. I remember my mother wanting to take with her this little tea pot. They had so many tea pots in the main homestead, but she



couldn't even have one teapot. But anyway, that's how hard times were, you just could not buy things.

ROBERTS: The tea pot incident, the main house had all these things?

KANEMOTO: The main house, they're so wealthy, they have dishes, quilts, sleep twenty or thirty people.

ROBERTS: And they wouldn't share it?

KANEMOTO: They wouldn't share it, because it belongs to the homestead, but what they acquired from the pre-war days they just held on to those things. They were selfish. The more you have, the more you want to hang on to it. Even families were being torn by this greed and selfishness. I remember my father by then had ulcers, certified ulcers [from the Montana days], he was taking medication. I remember my mother got caught with this little metal teapot to warm my father's water to drink down his medicine, she got into a hassle with the oldest brother-in-law. She was called a thief. Even during this war, such petty things, by today's standard you wonder how did we go through such ugliness. We were able to maintain a separate household. I don't know what



my father did to bring in the income, I wasn't concerned. We were constantly getting air raids by this time.

ROBERTS: Your brother's living with you now, right?

KANEMOTO: Right, right. Then the air raids are coming everyday. Everyone had bomb shelters, we were running to bomb shelters. Towards the end, I remember we never used the bomb shelters. We could see the [United States] B-29s going back and forth, they'd be circling and coming back, drop the bombs and coming back. It happened so frequently that people just never ran to the shelters because it was so common. You can tell once the plane leaves you have a few minutes to do whatever you want to and then come back. It's kind of a real strange situation. You can do all this preparation and toward the end you don't even care anymore. Then when the atomic bomb fell, see where we lived is right on the border of Hiroshima, we were only about eighty air miles away, so we could see this pink sky. It was the most beautiful sky. I think it was more beautiful than most beautiful sunsets. It was strange, we could see this in



full view. But not knowing what had happened. This is how close we were. Didn't know what had happened. Of course, little by little the information filtered back and we heard it. By this time, as I mentioned earlier, my brother was already drafted into the Japanese army. I guess he was doing his thing, picking up the bodies and getting ready for the mass burials. So we lost touch with him for awhile here, but anyway everyone was on guard listening for the next news on the radio.

ROBERTS: By now are you interested in what's going on, because I mean you're sixteen?

KANEMOTO: Oh yes.

ROBERTS: You're more aware than when this all first started at the age of thirteen, of really the consequences of everything.

KANEMOTO: Here I am enrolled in the girls high school, but I'm not doing any academic work. We're sewing buttons. My other classmates are going to the factories to do their war efforts. After the war, I graduated, no I guess there was about a year that I did have a full year of academics. I had alot of catching up because they just kind



of moved us on because of the war, and we didn't get any academics in, they just held us back and we did it. I was so behind that I had a hard time. I remember my mother, when I think of it now, she was really a good mother, who was educated, who sat down with me and went over the homework with me. For someone who's sixteen, seventeen years of age trying to learn Chinese history is so far-fetched after the war. Nothing would sink in. My mother [Laughter] would say "Gee this is interesting" when she was trying to go over the material with me. I was popular, because I was different again. By my stature, you can tell I'm five feet four and a half, that's pretty big for a Japanese. I stood out. People knew that I was different. They called me America-jin meaning American person. I was kind of popular. I mean people didn't treat me badly, but there was one friend to this day, I correspond with [Sakae Abe Otsuka]. I saw [her] about three years ago in Japan. She took notes for me in the classroom and brought it back to my mother and my mother would go over the material with me. Science and math wasn't too



bad, but it was those history classes. Those and the Japanese language, they were real hard. Like math, you can look at the figures and then you can kind of solve it. Even science, so long as I can verbalize it, I can understand it. But history and Japanese language were my hard classes. Okay, we struggled with that, then when the atomic bomb happened and a week later we knew we surrendered, then there was another shift for the whole Japanese community. Then there's another panic for that matter.

ROBERTS: This is after they dropped the bomb on Nagasaki?

KANEMOTO: Nagasaki. Then they're talking about who's going to occupy where. It turns out Hiroshima was going to be occupied by the Australians and Okayama was going to be by the Americans. Those are like prefectures, like a state, so they have to have guards and my father being the entrepreneur again, he volunteered his services, for a fee, to help with the police department, the Japanese police department. Saying "No problem, if the Americans come and occupy this area, I can help you." See this is in the country now. They needed interpreters to work



with [United States] occupation [forces]. This was kind of a god-send situation because it gave my father such a status again, because he was very popular. He certainly could speak the language. So he became part of the police force and of course word filtered down that you must cooperate with the American occupation forces. They are going to protect you and take care of the border between Hiroshima, which was occupied by the Australians. Then my father taught English, because English was a must now. To be occupied you must learn your English. So he was teaching adults as well as students. He was cooperating very well.

ROBERTS: Did your status of living go up somewhat?

KANEMOTO: I think a little bit. Then when the Americans came while they drove through with the jeeps and there was a lieutenant from Seattle. Of course, my father and he just hit it off and he shared some of his army rations. I mean this is very opportunistic. [Laughter] I have to say it's a survival.

ROBERTS: Oh well sure. You do anything to survive.

[End Tape 2, Side B]



[Begin Tape 3, Side A]

KANEMOTO: Human nature.

ROBERTS: Yea.

KANEMOTO: So let me see now, my father was being an opportunist and of course by then he can come out and said, "Of course, Japan would have lost. I knew that from the first day that I arrived back to Japan." Okay, he was playing his opportunistic role. He was the community leader, community personality. He was a teacher of the English language and he worked with the Japanese police, me too. I was in a role. I was in this exclusive Japanese girls high school. The principal was very fearful of American GIs coming on to the girls' territory and raping them or whatever. They had visions of this, so they started using me as one of the staff. Here I am eighteen years old, this is my senior year, and I was their interpreter. I was also the English conversation person amongst my own peers. There's an English teacher but his enunciation was so poor; the English format and the English accent, you could hardly understand him. When the GIs did come, they were very low



ranked and they were fooling around thinking they were great. They found this girls high school and they found someone who could speak English. Of course, as soon as they came to the high school, the principal got excited, he was really scared, really scared, he didn't know whether it was a PFC or an officer, he was scared just with the Americans coming down the street, because he was responsible for these hundreds of girls. I get this buzz saying "Tsutakawa you have to come to the office." Here I am, my first year that I can really settle down and look to my academics, but I'm being called to the office constantly to help the principal out. If that isn't status. . . .

ROBERTS: Oh, well sure. Were you paid in this capacity?

KANEMOTO: No, I wasn't. But I was exchanged for grades. [Laughter] So I didn't do too bad. This is the way I was pulled out from class and I was the school's primary interpreter. For that matter, one time I remember I was going to have a history test and I even asked the guy in the jeep to come at a certain time, so that I can get pulled out of class. Anytime that the GIs



came, they [principal] was really afraid, they would call for me. Of course, American GIs too, are so happy to talk to somebody they can understand. Out of all this there are a few chuckles.

ROBERTS: So how long did you continue in that capacity?

KANEMOTO: Until I graduated.

ROBERTS: Any problems with the American GIs?

KANEMOTO: No problems. They're just young guys and they were good. I know my father took advantage of it. I remember the lieutenant brought some flour and some butter, some basic food staples, but those guys were hungry too. Hungry meaning for friendship and someone. So it was kind of neat. I have some pictures I can show you. I mean I just chuckle, because I do have a high school diploma. [Laughter] I use the word carefully to prove the point that I am a high school graduate, I really cannot say that I am that proficient. I do have the papers. Okay, the next step, what do I do? My mother's the one who encouraged me to apply for a college, for some reason she kind of picked the Doshisha College in Kyoto. It was run by the American



Congregation Church. There was an English Department. They had a Home Economics and the English Departments. That was the school that I applied for and for some reason the acceptance letter was caught behind the shoe box that was at the entry way [of our home]. I didn't see it. It was kind of a panic toward the end, because we were wondering why I didn't get accepted to the English school. And sure enough it fell through the cracks. We called the school and they said sure, you were accepted. Real quickly we went to Kyoto, we didn't have too much money. It was a very long trip. It's a days trip from Okayama to Kyoto. I did enroll as an official student, as an English major. College level, right. As far as the high school is concerned, I think there were only about four out about one hundred and eighty students, there who went on to college level, so I was one of them. They were so proud. It is a country school, but then it is the only prefectural school in the area, it's elite. I didn't last at Doshisha too long. That starts in Spring, I think in March. Then when I got into Kyoto, my



goodness, Kyoto was not touched by the bomb, I think the Americans planned it that way from what I understand, because it's such a national treasure. It's not even hindsight, it's foresight, it was a wonderful thing, because it [the entire city of Kyoto] was an irreplaceable national treasure. During the war the American Literature Department had to destroy anything American, anything English. So what they did was of course burn all the text books.

ROBERTS: After the war they did this?

KANEMOTO: No, this was during the war. It was an American Congregational Church sponsored college. They had that reciprocity agreement with the United States. Of course in the hysteria too, burned everything. So my recollection of this education was the mimeographed Shakespearean notes that they found. Then we translated them back and forth to English, to Japanese or vice a versa. They took the easy way out for me, because it's easier for me to read English and then put it into Japanese. I could read English much more comfortably than Japanese. This makes it hard for the Japanese students, well that's the way



they did it, but it turned out to be easier for me. I managed to hang in there. It was another experience. Here I am a college student in Japan. Faking my way, I didn't really go through all the steps, because sewing buttons doesn't really educate you.

ROBERTS: Or being a translator. I like that.

KANEMOTO: I'm saying that I do have a very unique [history]. I appreciate your taking the time to do this. Okay, by then in the city I find that there are many jobs. The American occupation is all over, they need people who speak English. The temptations were so great. As a college student, it was so sad. I remember we had a study period, at that time other students and I went to the dorms and we went to the mess [hall]. We ate our food, but it was rationed. Of course, it was very meager food. We went to community baths. Living as a Japanese student it was pretty sad. On the other hand, you're being welcomed by the American occupation and I fit in quite easy because I just came back to Japan. I shouldn't say return, but went to Japan three years before, so my English wasn't too faltered



and my communication with the Americans, by then, I'm nineteen. So I applied for a job at a American army hospital, which was not too far from the women's college and I was readily hired. My job was as an assistant librarian. It was kind of fun, I mean, there was a full-fledged army librarian, with all their credentials. She was a professional person. I worked as the assistant. She gave me a cart loaded with books and I visited the American patients in the hospitals. These were all GIs. Oh god, here I am nineteen and here I get to visit these people with a cart full of books and get paid for it, right. So that went on for about one year; it was fun, but then it wasn't getting me anywhere. I think I was being paid about thirty-six dollars a month.

ROBERTS: Was that good money back then?

KANEMOTO: For the indigent workers, like I was paid as a Japanese, that was good pay. But I would never get ahead because remember the exchange rate was three-hundred and sixty to one dollar. So I would never be able to save enough money to ever pay my fare back. The job gave us room and



board, which was helpful. That's how desperate the occupation forces were, they were looking for people who spoke English. So I had a dorm across the street from the hospital and we ate at the hospital with the patients. So we had GI food which is very heavy and rich. I was hundred and fifteen pounds during the war years and then I was down to hundred and twelve and then of course I went up quickly to hundred and thirty in no time, all because of the rich food. This librarian, there were two librarians [Shirley Welshinger and Rosemary Lang] that I worked under and then there was a reduction and they were saying she's going to be in charge of other area libraries. So they put me in charge. It made me feel good that I could do something. But it really wasn't getting me anywhere. This field librarian, I still correspond with her, she said, "Marion, I want you to go back [to the United States]. Don't you have any place that you can go back to in the United States?" She finally checked it out, so that maybe she can send me back to her mother who lived in Palm Beach, Florida. There never has been anybody, a



total stranger and librarian, who was ready to take me, who lived in an enemy country, to live with her mother. I mean I never met her mother. She was a single lady and reaching out to this extent, I thought, gee it made me feel so good that this good will is really the American way. It never did happen. It turned out that my relatives in Seattle were struggling with their business, but then they wanted me to bring back their daughter [Suwako Moriguchi] who was left in Japan before the war. They would pay my way back, third-class. This is the way it should be done, so my parents thought it was a good idea that I should go back to the United States. My father had found funds from a friend who owned a poultry farm in Petaluma, California, who was willing to pay my fare back. But it turned out that it was actually my cousin's husband [Fujimatsu Moriguchi] who was in this grocery business was willing to pay my third-class fare back, so that's the way I came back.

ROBERTS: Did you bring your cousin with you?



appreciate that and so she made me move on. Before I came back to Seattle, my father said there's a New York Life insurance that I bought for you and your older brother, who was living in Japan. When you are twenty-one, it matures, at that time it was twenty-one it was not eighteen, that there's a college fund if. . . . You know by now I was twenty-one, because I had worked for the United States Army for a few years. He said that money should be mature, look into it. He didn't want me to be a burden on somebody, so he said well you do have that insurance. He did give me the number [and an attorney's name, Melville Monheimer], so I did look into it. I found out that if anything had happened to my father, if he was dead, that money would have come to me, matured, but because he was not dead it was payable to him and so that maturity money went to that pot of money [Alien Property Account Fund], remember everything was confiscated? All that money. It was only about two thousand dollars but nevertheless, in those days it was. . . . Well see, he was saying you could use that to go to



college, but no, we found out that because it was only payable to him it was added to the pot, the big confiscated pot. Okay, so then he resorted to a friend that was doing well in the poultry business in Petaluma, he'll loan you the money to go to school. By then, let's see, as soon as I came back, I found out that I had to have the U.S. [United States] government, and history class at the high school level to go to any college-level entry. So I wrote to adult education. I think the next week after, because I came back in February the semester had started. I wrote immediately to the school. That's when I picked the basic classes one typing, one history, and the summer semester to take the two semesters of U.S. [United States], history one and two to qualify for any entry level at any college. While I was there I saw little flyer hanging on the bulletin board, it came from Rochester, Minnesota, St. Mary's this is a nursing school. For some reason it seemed like it was just put there for me. I asked the secretary she said, "Oh, you can have it." So I took it. Then I was living with this artist's



sister [Sadako Moriguchi], also my cousin, they had seven children. The oldest one was maybe sixteen, so you can imagine the little ones they had and they put me into a sewing room, makeshift. All the family slept upstairs, but they made a little niche for me downstairs and I was going to this adult school. After adult school, I would go to the store that they owned and I went to package shrimps, cookies into one pound or two pound packages. That's the kind of thing that I did. It wasn't hard work, but they made this job for me so that they could give me a little pin money. I appreciated that. I look back on it and feel they never used me as a babysitter. My cousin never took advantage of me. I appreciated that. I'm still very close to her. But then when I was getting close to graduating from the Adult Education, at the end of that summer well my cousin's husband said, "Oh congratulations" and he said "Well I'll buy you a typewriter." He bought me a portable typewriter. He told me to share it with his son [Kenbo Moriguchi], who was sixteen. All the Nisei gals of my age were becoming secretaries,



that was the thing. Well, I'm not a very good sit-down type of person, nor one-track minded. I can't do one thing all the time. When I saw that nursing flyer, I thought heck with it, I'll just write and inquire about it. I wrote to Rochester, Minnesota nursing school at the Catholic hospital. I got a response. It was in no time that it seemed like I had everything that they required, like my U.S. history and my citizenship. I should say in trying to come back to the United States I had no problem. None at all. I still have that passport. We went to Kobe to get it. My father took me and I had no problem. This is why I just don't understand why I'm not in that redress. But anyway, my artist cousin was suppose to have over two thousand dollars from the house that he had sold. That house that was in his name, my father had paid for, but it was in my cousin's account. Apparently, he had his hard times and he had used it up. So there was no fund. Now my father was trying to find my tuition money from his good friend [Eiichi Yamamoto], but then, my cousin's husband [Fujimatsu] said no way are you



going outside of the family. I will put up the bill. Here he had his business, seven children, don't go outside the family. What a disgrace, don't you ever do that again. Anyway, all toll I remember my tuition was two thousand dollars for a three year training. The first year was a thousand dollars and then we work our way through. Of course, I had uniforms and other expenses. Well, somehow I did get to Rochester, Minnesota and when I asked for my pin money [\$15.00 a month] from my cousin George, who was suppose to have that other money [from the sale of the house], he said "Well I don't have any money," but he was working for his masters at the university. [ ]

Sometimes I didn't see my allowance, because he already had a family. He was older. He was forty. He had a son, wife. He said, "During the summer I don't have a job, so I can't send it to you." So I didn't have any money, but that was okay at least through the nursing school I had a place to eat and sleep. Those were lean years.

ROBERTS: Sounds like it.



KANEMOTO: Yes. Turns out that this Rochester, Minnesota St. Mary's was one of the affiliates with the Mayo Clinics, little did I know. So I'm still saying, wow this was meant to be. By then, I was real serious. I knew my funds were very limited, because it was an iffy situation all the way. Every little money I had to. . . . Everything that my father had told me that I had counted on, the house money, the insurance money . . .

ROBERTS: . . . did he know that all the things you were counting on had not materialized?

KANEMOTO: I had to tell him. He felt real bad. Because like I say, I wasn't all that close to my father as a kid, because he was such a busy man, but that's the time I really got close to my father. I have boxes of his letters. He apologized, saying look what I got you into. He really was upset. He said I'll find a way. He had friends, networking. So he did try to find the funds for it. But of course, the artist sister's husband is the one who was very much against my going outside the family. Right. He gave me the money and that's the way I went to St. Mary's. I



didn't have the money to get there. Well, this artist cousin says take the Greyhound, you'll see some wonderful sights and really actually enjoy it. So what else can I do. I really wanted to go. I had a deadline to meet the enrollment, so I took the Greyhound, all by myself.

[Laughter] But it turned out to be the best thing ever. The [Franciscan] nuns were very good. See the nuns were the leaders and there were a few of them.

ROBERTS: I know I went to Catholic school.

KANEMOTO: Oh, okay. They took good care of me. I didn't become wayward because of that, I think, thank goodness.

ROBERTS: What time frame was this, that you started school?

KANEMOTO: I went there in '48. September of '48.

ROBERTS: And finished in June '51.

KANEMOTO: By '51. By then I was a very serious student, because I have to admit I was not a very serious student before this. But in nursing school, I knew how funds were so scarce and I couldn't do wrong. If I failed where would I go. So I had to do good. I didn't have the money to fool around,



it appeared students were maybe a year or two younger than I was. With all this Japan thing I was behind by a year or two compared to my other college classmates. They would study and go to the cafe and get their cigarettes and have the coffee and shoot the bull. I didn't even have that nickel to buy the coffee or even buy a cigarette [which at the time was the thing to do]. I tell my grown kids, a nickel coke on Saturday was my reward for the week, those bottled cokes.

ROBERTS: That's hard for our generation to understand.

KANEMOTO: Exactly, they can't. That's where I was. But then, by the time I graduated, I was one of the top tens and had official word for a surgical scholarship, which I did not take because I did get married right after. But I think the hardship does make people. That's what made me. I continued on. That was a diploma program, in those days there were very few college-level baccalaureate programs. There were some, maybe about five at that time [in the United States].

ROBERTS: When you graduated did your parents come?

KANEMOTO: No, no. No way.



ROBERTS: Have your parents ever come back to the states?

KANEMOTO: They did in '57.

ROBERTS: So they were allowed back in?

KANEMOTO: Well, my husband and I sponsored them.

ROBERTS: So they live here now.

KANEMOTO: They did. They soon died. My father had this ulcer that turned into cancer. They died in their early sixties.

ROBERTS: But they managed to come back here and live for awhile?

KANEMOTO: Yes, my mother lived for about fifteen years after. They were happy. This was what their goal was, because once you know the American way, the freedom and all that, nothing compares to that. Even though Japan is comfortable now, it's so different. You still have the constraints, the social [constraints].

ROBERTS: Unless you live someplace, which I never have, you really don't realize.

KANEMOTO: There's no comparison. That's how I got into my professional role, because I had no extra funds I just had to concentrate on studying. I'm glad that opportunity came. For that matter we were given three weeks vacation a year, we had no



other holidays off. But I went all the way to Chicago to look up my father's bookkeeper [Mina Kimura], who had settled there after the war, to spend my time with her. I remember my first year I looked up some other friends who had resettled after camp in the Chicago area. [Florence Tsuru Ichiba] told me let's go to this New Year's church party, sound innocent enough. So I went stag to the church party. That's where some University of Michigan students had crashed into, one of them was my husband [James Akira Kanemoto] to be. This was a dance and of course coming from Japan I had missed that phase of learning how to dance. I was a wall-flower. Looking at the personalities, people often say poor you, they always think it's my husband that doesn't dance, but it's me that doesn't dance.

ROBERTS: Especially, that was the Fifties then.

KANEMOTO: So I was the wall-flower, but he was nice enough to at least sit on the sidelines and talk to me. I didn't give him my address or anything, he knew my name, but I didn't give him my specific address. But it [a letter] found its way and he wrote a letter. He was an engineer, so he was



intelligent enough. It wasn't love at first sight by any means. But anyway his letters came through as a very intelligent person. So we corresponded from one year to the next. He wrote alot of good things. So I thought he's very understanding. Let's see, he graduated one year before I did from Ann Arbor, Michigan. He went through college on his GI Bill. So he appreciates that.

ROBERTS: Is he also Japanese?

KANEMOTO: Yes, he's from Hawaii.

ROBERTS: So he fought in World War II.

KANEMOTO: Right, he fought in Okinawa, the invasion of Okinawa. This is why he had some interest [in Okinawa] and that's where the first seven years of our marriage was. We ended up getting married and he got an assignment in Okinawa, because Okinawa was completely flattened by the war. With the rebuilding, he knew what he was getting into, he knew it was profitable at least, job wise. They were paying such differentials. I mean they were paying twenty-five percent overseas differential. I had just graduated and I wasn't tied down with any job, but while



waiting for our orders it was no problem getting day to day kind of jobs as a nurse. At least we kind of knew in our two fields we can make it. He too was down to nothing. He had used everything from the GI Bill, as you know they don't give you extras.

ROBERTS: Right, no, not at all.

KANEMOTO: I had borrowed money from my cousin which I had returned. I remember right after I graduated, while I was in Rochester, I became head nurse of pediatrics. Soon as you graduate they want you to stay, so they give you a head nurse position.

ROBERTS: Actually at the school? It was like a teaching hospital, then?

KANEMOTO: Teaching, right, right. So I stayed there. Then my husband went overseas working with the [United States] Army Corp of Engineers.

ROBERTS: Were you married now?

KANEMOTO: No, my husband insisted I finish nursing school and I'm glad he did. Let's see, he went to Okinawa first. He worked there for two and a half years. He didn't have any savings either. So when he came back, with the twenty-five percent differential that was a good savings for him.



[End Tape 3, Side A]

[Begin Tape 3, Side B]

KANEMOTO: And working for the Army, they kind of provide you with room and board, so that's really good savings. Of course, you're denied alot of these other things, it's a war-torn country. So after working there for two and a half years he came back with some savings, by then I was finished with my nursing school. I was already a head nurse and then we decided to get married. Then at the time he was understanding enough to say "Well, let's look into the confiscated money for my father."

ROBERTS: This is '52 when you got married?

KANEMOTO: Exactly. I gave my notice and we headed for Washington D.C. where all the papers were, the War Relocation [Board] and so forth. We found out that it would take a few days. My husband did get a job in Washington D.C. so we could do this in the meantime, investigating, do our research. We found out that when it's a family business, while my father's oldest brother owned eighty percent of the business. My father owned ten percent of the business. My uncle [Jin],



just above my father, owned ten percent. The one that had the stroke [Inaudible]. He had technically owned ten percent on paper, so legally if we fought it to claim the rights to what they had confiscated, you see it wouldn't be my father's at all. I thought well here I am, I'm the only one whose gone this far to look into it . . .

ROBERTS: . . . it would have been for your uncle, right?

KANEMOTO: Yes, right. So then, the uncle that owned the eighty percent was this artist's father [Shozo].

ROBERTS: That lived in Japan?

KANEMOTO: Yes, cousin George he had no interest. Remember I said he was different. He was an artist and he had no interest in the money.

ROBERTS: But his father was in Japan?

KANEMOTO: Right, right. That's right. So it was kind of a lost cause. Neither of us had the money, and you know to fight anything like that you need money. So we just kind of dropped it at that. We never brought it to a head. My brothers either. I have a professor brother at the University of Missouri right now, and they have no interest in it. I mean, you know, we're here,



we're comfortable, we don't need to prove anything. I think at this point we're just saying well people understand that this happened. I mean, I think that's satisfying enough. It didn't have to be, but it is.

ROBERTS: Some things in life you have to learn to accept what you can't change. Do you plan on pursuing reparations, the redress bill?

KANEMOTO: I don't know. I've talked to the director of the redress, Bob Brat. He told me at the first meeting, I've met him twice, he mentioned that there were about two hundred and forty of us minors in the same category. But I don't know where they are. They're scattered throughout the United States. And if I did it on my own, again its the money, I could easily use twenty thousand dollars just to do that. What would I gain? Even if I tried to prove a point, it takes so much energy to do this thing, it does. Of course my son [Ames Joji Kanemoto], who's my youngest child, took legal studies at Berkeley and he was saying he'd look into it. But nothing has really come of it. We all know that twenty-thousand is nothing when it comes to trying to



work up a court case. I have let the JACL, the Japanese American Citizens' League, Carol [Hisatomi] the president [of Florin JACL], this is why she knows, I told her if you hear of any class-action suit going on, I told Carol to let me know, so that I could at least jointly apply. But as you probably know, in the Forties, there were very few Japanese attorneys who could fight in anyway to say hey this isn't fair. Like Henry Taketa, that you met, he's one of the few. A handful of attorneys that were educated to that point. I think if it happened now, it wouldn't go very far, because there are just too many people who are educated that say hey the American law does not work that way. They have an understanding.

ROBERTS: I think the Native Americans are a good example of that, you know. They finally have realized, educate some of our people into being lawyers and have them take our cases, because otherwise they have a tendency to just push you around, the government will if you allow them to.



KANEMOTO: It's sad. I think that's where education does count. So in spite of the hardship, I'm grateful that I did finish some kind of a profession, because amongst my friends, the people who did not experience the same thing, they still ended up being secretaries. I mean not to say secretaries are bad, but you know they just compromised and settled for . . . . I know there are many intelligent people my age who could of really become something, bigger things, you know. So there are very few people my age who have finished school. For that matter, to finish my career, of course I'm retired now, when I was raising my family in Okinawa I had no problem getting a nursing job, because it was an American dependent school. We were over there, it was the American government school.

ROBERTS: You lived over there seven years?

KANEMOTO: Seven and a half years.

ROBERTS: Sometime in '52, to around end of '59.

KANEMOTO: We came back the end of '59. I had two of my children there and it just seemed like I was competing with somebody that was an American dependent school officer's wife, but then my



being the head nurse of pediatrics at St. Mary's in Rochester counted for something, so I went over and got the job. It was a nice job, because holidays were off. I thought hey, school nursing isn't bad. Because my husband had a good job as an engineer, it's not like I had to work. I thought, gee this is nice I can keep up my career and still spend enough time with my family. But when I came back, let's see by then it was 1960, I thought well gee I'll go into school nursing when the time comes. Oh, what a shock. I found out you have to have a degree.

ROBERTS: From a four-year college.

KANEMOTO: From a four-year college and you have to have a credential, now that's a master's degree. So then I thought, okay. I enrolled in the junior college to get alot of the under graduate college-level history and English and all the lower-division work done before I could be accepted. They told me at UCLA [University of California Los Angeles] then they would give me the junior year. [ ] So I started working on that. You can imagine it took me thirteen years to get my degree above my diploma from St. Mary's.



ROBERTS: So in '73.

KANEMOTO: Yes, '73. By then I had a little bit more, because I was working into the credential part. That's a full year. Now they extended that to more. But it was alright. It gave me something to do without guilt. Because when you say going to school it's not like playing. Actually, I enjoyed it by then because I was more of an adult. History meant more to me. The science too, I had to redo alot because they said things have changed since your time. But it was okay. I picked and chose what I had to do at the time, a class a semester, or two classes a semester, it's the way I did it. So you can imagine to go through all this I had a very patient husband, who was very understanding. He never said go or don't do it, so this is why, he's a very understanding person, but he never really pushed me. He never said forget it. He never discouraged me. He actually helped me with my physics, because I had to take physics and he helped me with those problems. So it took me that long. Before I even graduated, I got a job with the Elk Grove Unified School District. I



had a job before I even got my diploma in my hands, because the professor [Agatha Anderson] in the nursing division, who was teaching the school nursing as well as the public health, hooked me up with the instructional service man [Don Larson] who became my boss for fifteen years. He was really neat. Well, because they said you're an older mature woman, you can just slip in. I really appreciate what actually became of all this because that is my retirement. It's not very long, fifteen years.

ROBERTS: Is that where you stayed the Elk Grove School District?

KANEMOTO: Yes, the entire time. In the meantime I started out as step one, on the payroll, but then I worked all the way up to seventy-five units beyond my bachelors. By then my kids were all gone and going to class was my recreation.

ROBERTS: Three children?

KANEMOTO: Four children. Three girls [Ryusanne Chiyo Kanemoto, Arleen Yasu Kanemoto Powlesland, Laurie Jo Kanemoto Miyasaki] and one son [Ames Joji Kanemoto].

ROBERTS: Now, you were the only daughter, correct?



KANEMOTO: Right. For my kids too, they saw me studying and any spare time I had, I was studying or going to school. Well, that was my recreation, there were certain areas where I'm not very athletic. I'm in golf now, and catching up but not very successful [Laughter]. But anyway, I do believe in just going on. There's no end to what you can learn. Now I'm into this oral history and I continue to learn even though I'm retired. While I was working it was only nursing and that was another bad feature, because I had to concentrate so much to catch up for the lost time and repeat so much of my nursing. I challenged Sac State [California State University, Sacramento] and they only allowed three challenges, but I challenged five and I petitioned them and got all of it.

ROBERTS: Well, that's good. So you went to Sac State.

KANEMOTO: Sac State, because they said you have to have a foreign language, oh what am I going to use foreign language [for]. Fortunately they accepted Japanese and Japanese wasn't difficult for me, so I took another opportunistic way and got my language credits that way. Challenged



alot of the nursing classes, I think only the leadership and psychiatry were the only ones that weren't easy. I challenged P.E. [Physical Education] I met a few nice instructors. Some were not that nice. They thought you're older and more mature, I had the feeling or message that I was wasting their time [

]. I can understand that, but then I again I wanted to. By then I would have fought it. There were some people, some older nurses, older than I, that went back to college and wanted to get back into nursing and get a B.S. [Bachelor of Science] in nursing. They [the nursing department] made it so difficult. They [older nurses] went into Health and Education and got their degree that way to become a school nurse, but I did get into the [nursing department].

ROBERTS: So did you encounter any discrimination at all?  
You must not have.

KANEMOTO: You mean applying for a job or Sac State?

ROBERTS: Well no, just applying for a job. You had the job before you even graduated, so. . . .



KANEMOTO: No, no never, never. Nursing is one area that you always have people who are sick and I lived in Washington D.C. while we were waiting for our assignment, I worked at a children's hospital, no problem at all. I worked as a school nurse in Okinawa, before that I worked for an American Clinic. It was industrial nursing. Construction people, who were the Okinawans that they [United States forces] were using. See they didn't get treated at the Army base, they had to be treated by a private [hospital]. So I was the head nurse for that and I had about five Okinawan nurses. Because of my [bilingual] language [ability], again I felt like there was a place for me. Wherever I went there was a place for me. It was kind of neat. Then we didn't have to leave Okinawa, but then my oldest one was in second grade. My second child was going into kindergarten. My mother used to write come back, come back to the mainland. The schools are better back here. She wanted the so-called normal life. She was writing to me over there. We decided, with confidence, my husband decided, we'd go back. We did find out that there were



few engineering jobs [Laughter]. We ran into some setback there. There's really been a lot of surprises.

ROBERTS: You seem like you've worked through it.

KANEMOTO: Yes. There are ways to do it. You just can't be stuck in that hole, you really have to kind of play it.

ROBERTS: [Inaudible]

KANEMOTO: Yes, I think so. I appreciate what's happened.

ROBERTS: Sounds like it been an interesting, but difficult life at times.

KANEMOTO: Yes, but then I grew from those experiences.

ROBERTS: Make you the person you are today.

KANEMOTO: Yea, right.

ROBERTS: That's what I always tell my kids.

KANEMOTO: So you have how many kids?

ROBERTS: I have four.

KANEMOTO: You have four, my goodness.

ROBERTS: They're all adopted.

KANEMOTO: Oh my gosh. And then you go to school, full time?

ROBERTS: No, these are my last two semesters, because I have history seminars. I'm basically done.



They're quite intense, so I dropped down to nine units. I had been carrying fifteen units up until that time.

KANEMOTO: Wow, that's so time consuming.

ROBERTS: I like this though. This is for my Asian-American class, it ties in with history, which is my major. Ethnic studies is one of my minors. I have a double minor. I have a anthropology minor also. So it's interconnected and interrelated.

KANEMOTO: What do you want to do with it?

ROBERTS: Teach college level.

KANEMOTO: Right, right. Oh my. Like I say, being a little older you do have the advantage, really. I think your heart is in it. I can admit, because I'm not afraid of anything. When I'm retired at this age what can they do to me? What I said today, I mean is the FBI going to come and say hey. I'm not afraid anymore. When you look back on it, it's true, there's a time when I was not serious, but as a mature person you do grow. Because you're doing it by choice.



ROBERTS: I went through that. I went to Catholic school for twelve years and the automatic thing to do when I graduated was go to college. While I really didn't want to. I went about three weeks and said forget this, I don't want to do this. So now ten years later, after graduating, it's like you say, you've learn things along the way and I've learned that to do what I want to do I have to have an education. Until you realize that and go back, you realize how important it is.

KANEMOTO: Yes, yes. It definitely is.

ROBERTS: But trying to get kids to realize that.

KANEMOTO: Yes, yes. There is such a thing as timing. Like my four they all went to the UC [University of California] [System]. I think they had more fun than seriousness. But they're all adults now and so they come back and say they never questioned it. They thought they were suppose to do it. And then they did it. My youngest son, he's very bright. He took legal studies. I thought he was going to law school. He kind of said that. But when he graduated he said "I'm not going to waste my time thumbing through all those books,



why should I?" So now he's in design and graphic arts. He's in business for himself. He's never taken too many art classes, but this is what he likes to do. This is what he wants. Isn't happiness the thing? So now he's an adult and I feel like I can't choose for him. He was given an opportunity. [ ] [Your decision to teach] college level, that's great. I mean college kids are there by choice, I think you'll have better luck with them.

ROBERTS: Initially when I first started, I started at the community college level, I thought about teaching high school and I thought it's like going into a combat zone anymore teaching high school. There's so many concepts and ideas and these types of things, that I'd like to expose to people, and I don't think you can do it in high school, it has to be at college level. So that's why I changed.

KANEMOTO: The caliber of students are different. They're there because they want to be. I think it's worth your time. I see, well that's interesting. Well I ended up having an assignment for a [Rutter] junior high school, I kept the two



schools throughout my fifteen years and the elementary school [Samuel Kennedy]. Which was a walk-to community elementary school but then they started bussing the kids, it turned out seventy percent of the kids were on free-lunch program. The children and the families were so different, single families. Even the junior high, they were so lost. Even if you worked double time, two times harder, you couldn't see the dent in it. It got to the point where it was so discouraging, I couldn't even sleep at night and chose to retire at sixty. I thought, to that point I had worked so hard, weekends, nights I went to workshops and classes. Then the people I had to work with, even the staff, you kind of know. [ ] Is it going to be easier? Is it going to be enjoyable? Even if it's hard you don't mind if you have good people to work with. So it was kind of a sudden decision that I just decided I was going to leave, I wasn't going to be rich after only fifteen years. I thought I proved my point, I got my degree. I did what I wanted to do, so now I'm trying to do some of this community work;



plus being a good grandmother. You see my daughter's over here with her son. They're in the backyard so don't worry. To babysit is better, because my kids were denied of grandparents. So I feel I'm lucky that I can do that.

ROBERTS: Alot of kids nowadays are. . . .

KANEMOTO: Exactly, World War II really did change things, it really did.

ROBERTS: Because my parents live up in Oregon and we see them about once every two or three months we go up.

KANEMOTO: Well, that's quite frequent.

ROBERTS: Yea, but it's not the same as if they lived right here.

KANEMOTO: What part of Oregon?

ROBERTS: Medford.

KANEMOTO: The fruit country.

ROBERTS: Right by Harry and David and Ashland, Oregon. Beautiful country up there. The kids like going because they [grandparents] have a so-called farm.

KANEMOTO: Right, right. That's an education. Free, that's neat.



ROBERTS: Well, I'll go ahead and go over this and if it's alright sometime next week I'll get a hold of you and see if I have any questions. I'm sure I will.

KANEMOTO: I'll look for that newsletter from that particular camp, because I can always xerox it off and give it to you. There's so few of them floating around, I thought that would be interesting. You already have such a grasp of this camp thing. Now that I look back on it, what an enormous expense the government went through.

ROBERTS: What I find ironic is no one in Hawaii was interned and no one past this certain line was interned. It was just this big frantic thing, what to do with the [Japanese].

KANEMOTO: It was all due to hysteria. Of course people say, it's for the Japanese safety and many Japanese would say it's for our security, otherwise they would come down and gun us down. People were fearful. Hysteria works in different ways.

ROBERTS: Well, the day after Pearl Harbor was bombed in San Francisco Bay there were seven Japanese found.



KANEMOTO: Is that right? I don't know those details.

ROBERTS: Some people just went crazy.

KANEMOTO: I've been collecting clippings and clippings thinking that I would someday do something with it. It's an enormous [job]. That's why I say I'm sorry to give you so much garbage.

ROBERTS: Oh, that's fine.

KANEMOTO: It's really like Carol warned you.

ROBERTS: I don't think of it as garbage.

KANEMOTO: It's really monumental.

ROBERTS: It's all interrelated in there.

KANEMOTO: But I glad I'm talking to you, because I think with your maturity, certainly you're with it.

ROBERTS: Thank you.

KANEMOTO: I really appreciate that.

ROBERTS: But like I say, it's not garbage. I didn't mean to key so much on your family, but it's all interrelated.

KANEMOTO: Yes, it is.

ROBERTS: It's important for your background, who you were.

KANEMOTO: I feel very fortunate to come this far from zero, you know it really is. When my parents passed away, they certainly did not leave us



anything. [ ] My  
husband lived a different kind of life, too.  
They were denied, though they had it. But you  
know every family has their differences. We're  
just trying to, with our educated background,  
choose the best thing and make our own little  
family do the right thing. . . .

ROBERTS: That's what is important.

KANEMOTO: I think so. That's what education is all about.  
My educated kids give us a hard time. [Laughter]  
Trying to do their right thing.

ROBERTS: Isn't that the truth.

KANEMOTO: So I do not give them free advice.

ROBERTS: But their kids will get old someday.

KANEMOTO: If they ask me I offer it, but I do not  
volunteer it. [Laughter]

ROBERTS: I know that feeling.

[End Tape 3, Side B]

[Begin Tape 4, Side A]

ROBERTS: Alot of it was just spelling of names. Do you  
happen to know the month your parents were  
married?

KANEMOTO: October the eighth.



- ROBERTS: I was a little confused on this. Your father was the fifth son and the other four brothers had come over here and worked. Then went back to Japan fairly successful. Is that correct?
- KANEMOTO: Right.
- ROBERTS: Except for the one brother that suffered the stroke.
- KANEMOTO: Right, the fourth one [Jin].
- ROBERTS: The export-import business that your father had was that one of these businesses that his brothers had set up?
- KANEMOTO: It was kind of passed on.
- ROBERTS: Okay, that's what I was curious about. The name of the Japanese ship that you were transferred to?
- KANEMOTO: Teia Maru, T-E-I-A- M-A-R-U, Maru means circling ship.
- ROBERTS: Let's see here, on the time line, in '37 your brother was twelve and then he was drafted when he was eighteen, so that would be '43. So in '43 when you initially went over to Japan he was drafted?
- KANEMOTO: Soon after.



ROBERTS: Soon after you returned. So when the bombing occurred he was roughly around nineteen or twenty years old when he went into Hiroshima and helped clean up.

KANEMOTO: This was the thing my father was fearful of because he thought that my brother, who was becoming of age, would probably volunteer himself or would be forced to volunteer to the suicide squad [Kamikaze]. Because of age and timing he got drafted, he didn't volunteer into [service].

ROBERTS: Were the contractors volunteered then?

KANEMOTO: People were so frightened into all this military thing. As a father you can imagine, when your son is coming of age, knowing that he could do these drastic things during the war.

ROBERTS: Another time line is, I found out when Singapore fell February 15, 1942.

KANEMOTO: That's about right. Because he [father] left about a month before we went to camp. We were without a father for awhile there. It wasn't long, that's about right. Every time a major city fell to Japan then it seemed like there was a wave of another group of people being picked up by the FBI.



ROBERTS: They were interested in what was going on in the Japanese community, the federal government. He left in February of 1942, and then in April '42 you went to the . . .

KANEMOTO: . . . Puyallup camp.

ROBERTS: By then was the internment camp, [also assembly center] Camp Harmony, is that what it was called?

KANEMOTO: Not the internment, this was the assembly center.

ROBERTS: This Camp Harmony and this Puyallup . . .

KANEMOTO: Puyallup, it's the same. Puyallup was the town, but they also called it Camp Harmony.

ROBERTS: So the assembly center and the internment camp were basically the same then?

KANEMOTO: Well, it was just a step toward going to camp. See the permanent camp wasn't ready. To bring in thousands of people, it was just not ready, because remember it was a desert.

ROBERTS: That's what I'm getting at. Okay, you went to the fairgrounds and what was that called?

KANEMOTO: Assembly center [temporary quarters].

ROBERTS: Right, but the official name of it.

KANEMOTO: Camp Harmony, but then in the town of Puyallup.



ROBERTS: Then where was the actual internment camp?

KANEMOTO: Which one?

ROBERTS: The internment camp?

KANEMOTO: The big one?

ROBERTS: Yea.

KANEMOTO: Idaho. We were sent to a place called the Minidoka camp [one of ten internment camps].

ROBERTS: That's what it was. Do you know how to spell that?

KANEMOTO: M-I-N-I-D-O-K-A.

ROBERTS: That's where I was getting confused. I wasn't sure if they were the same or not.

KANEMOTO: With the urgency to confine us, that is why they put us in this assembly center.

ROBERTS: This is in the assembly center.

KANEMOTO: Right. The other one was a little bit more substantial. It was no deluxe place but. . . .

ROBERTS: They knew it was going to be there for awhile.

KANEMOTO: Right.

ROBERTS: Then in April you go into the assembly center, [Puyallup for two and half months, and then to Minidoka]? And there's no schooling. You're there for about eighteen months? Is that correct?



KANEMOTO: You're talking about Idaho now?

ROBERTS: Right.

KANEMOTO: Right, I was there [and attended school].

ROBERTS: Now two months before you were released to go to Japan, your father joined you.

KANEMOTO: He got sent back. I guess parole is not exactly the right word. He was released and joined the family. Because I guess they couldn't find anything on him. He was already moved on to Texas. The more I think about him, all these dates [start to run together]. It couldn't have been more than a month. I don't think it was even two months?

ROBERTS: The reason he came back to Idaho was because they didn't find [any evidence], not because he agreed to repatriation?

KANEMOTO: That's right. Oh, yes definitely. He had applied for repatriation but then the orders came in soon after he had rejoined the family.

ROBERTS: So it was because there was nothing on him.

KANEMOTO: That's right. That was the only reason why, because remember from the Idaho camp we were allowed to go out and relocate east, to find our way out, remember?



ROBERTS: To go shop?

KANEMOTO: To resettle into the mid-lands. We could go further out east. Not west, but we could move and relocate [East]. [ ] Otherwise the government would have to take care of us.

ROBERTS: Was that ever an option that your father considered, trying to get the family together?

KANEMOTO: Right, I think he would have thought of it if a few more months had passed. Because he was creative, innovative person. But as I recall, the orders came and he had requested it earlier. We were all separated. When he came back it just happened so soon after that, I don't even remember thinking about relocating.

ROBERTS: You made the statement that life in Japan was more difficult . . .

KANEMOTO: . . . early on, immediately. Physical, meaning the basic needs. The food, that's something daily. I mean there was a definite food shortage. We literally went hungry. We were living in the country, so it wasn't for something the farms [couldn't grow]. We grew [things] ourselves. I'm sure the city people had



it even worse. We went directly to a small farm, because this is my father's homestead.

ROBERTS: I'm curious, I know you said there was a main house where his older brother inherited and lived and then he [Marion's father] had bought a house and moved the lumber down . . .

KANEMOTO: . . . to the land portion he received.

ROBERTS: Yea, did they have a community garden just for the family? Or did they try to grow anything?

KANEMOTO: They grew it, but on your own property.

ROBERTS: So everybody had their own little parcel that they grew on. Food shortages were basically the thing that sticks out in your mind.

KANEMOTO: Right, right. You couldn't buy anything. It was a case where you couldn't buy clothes, you couldn't buy [Inaudible] fuel, you couldn't buy which was another kind of hardship. Clothing we had. What we had with us would have lasted us a few years. It was certainly not luxurious living. We had no furniture. It was just very sparse living. Not that we had any money but there just wasn't anything . . .

ROBERTS: . . . even if you had money, there just wasn't anything to buy.



KANEMOTO: I guess that's when the families wouldn't help out even if they could. But then everybody began to pull back and hold on to whatever they had, because they knew . . .

ROBERTS: . . . they had to protect themselves.

KANEMOTO: Right, survival.

ROBERTS: Okay you answered that question. So were there days when you would go without eating then?

KANEMOTO: No, it wasn't that bad. But everything was on rations. Like the rice was especially scarce, so we filled up on potatoes that we grew, sweet potatoes. We ate the sweet potato leaves, the squash leaves and the stems. Which was edible, but ordinarily before the war we never thought of eating it, but we turned that into food. I remember.

ROBERTS: You got real inventive.

KANEMOTO: Right, right. I did mention about the egg.

ROBERTS: Yes, you did. About your mother carrying it like a piece of gold. Yea, I thought that was so interesting. The name of the county where you lived?

KANEMOTO: In Japan?

ROBERTS: Huh-huh.



- KANEMOTO: Okay, it's called Shichigun, S-H-I-C-H-I-G-U-N<sup>1</sup>  
it's just one word.
- ROBERTS: And that was the province that bordered  
Hiroshima?
- KANEMOTO: Uh-huh.
- ROBERTS: Okay, You made the comment afterward that these  
were actually like little prefectures and when  
the [occupation forces] came in to occupy them,  
they became regions?
- KANEMOTO: No, the occupation forces like the Australians,  
the British, and the Americans they kind of  
divided [Japan] geographically. You occupy this  
portion and we'll occupy this portion.
- ROBERTS: Oh, I see what you're saying. Okay, different  
countries occupied . . .
- KANEMOTO: Okayama was where I lived, and so the  
Australians occupied Hiroshima. . . .
- ROBERTS: I was thinking the United States came in and  
made little countries out of these things.
- KANEMOTO: No, it was the occupation force. Remember they  
were the Allied Forces and so it wasn't only

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<sup>1</sup>The county of Shichigun has been renamed, it is now called Nishiebara.



Americans. It was Australians [who] were also involved in the occupation.

ROBERTS: Then you say you didn't know when the atom bomb was dropped [but] there was this beautiful sunset, once you actually found out it was an atom bomb and the devastation that had occurred, do you remember any type of reaction that you had?

KANEMOTO: Well they [Inaudible] because this is before TV [Television] and even the radio was very limited because as you know everything was destroyed. So the communications are really [poor]. It kind of trickled through. It took days before you really had the full impact. So being that we're not being pained or it's not visual or we're not feeling anything, for a few days we existed without really knowing the impact of it all. I think the radio came through. My parents were saying, "Well this is it. This is it." I think it was two days later the national news came out and said that we are going to surrender.

ROBERTS: Once you found out about the devastation, either through radio or however . . .



KANEMOTO: . . . it didn't have the impact. There's no communication. There's no TV.

ROBERTS: Nothing from your brother even though he was in the area?

KANEMOTO: No, no. We really didn't even know he was at that place doing that type of job. Because it was all a military [operation]. We just knew he went off and that was it. Of course, everybody in the neighborhood who was capable of helping with the war effort was gone. It wasn't anything unusual.

ROBERTS: I know your one brother was two years younger than you?

KANEMOTO: Two years younger.

ROBERTS: Now was he too young to go to the war effort?

KANEMOTO: He was. They didn't cross the line. Let's see up to eighteen was the draft and then if you volunteered at sixteen and seventeen, they would take you [more likely into the suicide squad].

ROBERTS: But they didn't draft you?

KANEMOTO: No, my brother didn't [get drafted].

ROBERTS: What was the name of the school you went to in Seattle?



KANEMOTO: Well, let's see now, the Rainier School was my elementary school and then Washington Junior High School was the place I was attending when this all happened, when my father was . . .

ROBERTS: . . . when the war broke out.

KANEMOTO: Yes, when the war broke out. My father was picked up.

ROBERTS: I have your dad's name, but your mother's?

KANEMOTO: Yachiyo, Y-A-C-H-I-Y-O.

ROBERTS: And her last name is?

KANEMOTO: Oh, you want the last name? Fukutake, F-U-K-U-T-A-K-E.

ROBERTS: That looks familiar. Is that Carol's last name?

KANEMOTO: Hisatomi.

ROBERTS: Oh, maybe I'll remember where it looks familiar from.

KANEMOTO: They all sound alike.

ROBERTS: No, not that. I thought you were going to say an -A- here at the end and that sounded awfully familiar. Your brother's name that was left over in Japan?

KANEMOTO: James.

ROBERTS: That one I can handle.

KANEMOTO: Oh, okay.



ROBERTS: We were talking about your reactions to being interned and your reaction walking into the internment camp and it was that it was stark and a desert. You make the comment that you couldn't believe this was happening. Now in relative terms, it happening in the United States? It happening to you personally? In what context couldn't you believe it was happening?

KANEMOTO: Well, see living in Seattle, it's so green and lush and then being brought to this desert with no evergreens. I didn't realize there was a place such as this in the United States.

ROBERTS: So just the stark contrast that you couldn't believe.

KANEMOTO: Right, that people could live there.

ROBERTS: Right, okay I see.

KANEMOTO: Absolutely no shade, because there was not even one green tree. I noticed that yes it was confined with the barbed-wire, but then again I guess the only consolation is that you're not alone. You have this mass of people, so you're not alone.

ROBERTS: So that was one of the things that you just couldn't believe . . .



KANEMOTO: . . . that there was such a place in the United States. Such a contrast to the Northwest.

ROBERTS: Well, you had lived your whole life in Seattle all your life?

KANEMOTO: Yea, right.

ROBERTS: I can see that, Seattle's so green.

KANEMOTO: Right, it's beautiful.

ROBERTS: We didn't really touch on when your father actually left. I know you said you weren't given [much time to say goodbye]. I know he was just wheeled out of the house by the FBI. Your reaction, anxiety?

KANEMOTO: Okay, there were a couple of ["round-ups"] before my father was picked up. You have this wave of people being picked up. Word gets around. [Interruption]

ROBERTS: Let's see, oh your reaction when your father left.

KANEMOTO: Okay, by the time my father was picked up, again you rationalize and my mother was saying, "It's because your father is a community leader." The bigger the business the more you are known within the community. Well, you are a suspect. We never thought that he did something wrong.



ROBERTS: Was this before he was picked up?

KANEMOTO: No after. Right after. We were saying, "Well dad is important."

ROBERTS: So that's how you dealt with it.

KANEMOTO: Yes, fifty years later I think we rationalized alot, because what could we do?

ROBERTS: Sure, there was really no logical explanation.  
[A large portion of personal conversation between Marion Kanemoto and Debbie Roberts was deleted from this portion of the text.]

ROBERTS: You mention your father and the violin, requesting the violin from the camp in Montana. You must have gotten it to him before you left for the assembly center.

KANEMOTO: I think so.

ROBERTS: There must have been some [connection]. At one point you say there was no contact and then there must have been some kind of contact then.



KANEMOTO: Right, right. I don't know the steps we went through, but then he did have it. So I guess we somehow got it to him.

ROBERTS: I thought that would be interesting . . .

KANEMOTO: . . . it was kind of comfort to know that at least he had the leisure time to have some hobby there with him. If he didn't do that I'm sure we would have lost it, in all this shuffles. Remember we did lose an awful lot as it was.

ROBERTS: Dates, your father went in February of '42 do you happen to know the month and the day he went to Texas?

KANEMOTO: I really don't know. He was there about a year [and also in Lordsburg, New Mexico].

ROBERTS: In Montana?

KANEMOTO: In Montana. Texas was not too long. I don't think it was more than six months.

ROBERTS: So in the Spring of '43?

KANEMOTO: I think so.

ROBERTS: Is probably when he went to Texas.

KANEMOTO: I think people were coming back from Montana to the main camp. I mean people who they started weeding as not so suspicious. But then when my father was moved on to [New Mexico] and Texas,



we thought well I guess he's really a suspect.  
That's all you can do. You couldn't fight it.

ROBERTS: Did they ever tell you or your father or mother why he was moved to Texas? Why he didn't clear the security of the camp and then six months later he's moved.

KANEMOTO: We never heard. I don't know how it came down. If it was in the form of an official letter, I don't remember, because if we did I would have read it for my mother, because my mother wasn't that accomplished in English. I would have been the one, but I don't remember. Everything that came from my father I remembered was censored. So I know what censor means, it was either blacked-out or cut-out. It's amazing how you bury things.

ROBERTS: And also because of your age. At the time most kids would have no idea [what was going on].

KANEMOTO: Right, at the time you are a young person and the seriousness of it all is not all there.

ROBERTS: In '43 do you remember if you started school before you went on the ship to New Jersey?

KANEMOTO: Yes.

ROBERTS: Do you happen to remember the month?



KANEMOTO: I think we started in September '42, I think it was late. They were really working hard to get the school going, get the kids busy in school. I remember this was a real high priority. We used to get word saying they were already working on the school, so they could open in September. Again, to give the high school people the units that they needed to move on, at least we had that. I finished the entire freshman year there.

ROBERTS: In summer of '43?

KANEMOTO: [ ]. I don't remember starting my sophomore year.

ROBERTS: Okay, then you arrived eighty-five days later, [in Japan on the exchange ship] towards the end of the year.

KANEMOTO: December I think we arrived.

ROBERTS: I think that was it.

KANEMOTO: Now, you can make a movie of it. [Laughter]

ROBERTS: I've been reading alot of biographies for this class, it's like you could write a book.

KANEMOTO: It is interesting. I mean I was not really bitter or angry at any particular person. I decided, due to my age, it was a time in my life and since you're with everybody you're not



what you call afraid. Because everybody's there and you know there's no Japanese who were left behind. If you choose to stay behind what would you do there? There's nobody there.

ROBERTS: In the sense of the big political scheme they probably didn't even realize [Inaudible].

KANEMOTO: I think that was the problem where our legal people [failed]. See the Chinese were there much earlier, so they were a little bit ahead as far as acculturation of the American know how. See the Japanese, age-wise, just didn't have the [lawyers], Henry Taketa was probably one of the rare few educated law attorney. [Inaudible] There were very few. I think this is why it happened. If the current population faced this they would certainly use the civil rights issues to a greater degree. I don't think they can [Inaudible]. Like you said last time, I think Indians are that way. When you have so few educated, I think this is where we found out and it's impressed us more than ever. But if you have education there are ways you can find a way to get out of it. It doesn't take long to realize this.



ROBERTS: Native Americans are a good example.

KANEMOTO: When I had to study the Indian spirit in one of my undergraduate classes, you fall in love with their ways of preserving things. They only take what they have to use, they don't waste or hoard. It's not capitalism. It's interesting how human nature is. They've tried for so long, they just haven't got out of it.

ROBERTS: They will, slowly but surely.

KANEMOTO: Slowly, slowly. Too slow.

ROBERTS: I think there's a big hamper there, the government.

KANEMOTO: They just don't have the motivation, they lost it, didn't they?

ROBERTS: Yea, it's tough when you've been oppressed and oppressed for that long.

KANEMOTO: We haven't been oppressed for that long. It was sudden and then we were released.

ROBERTS: That's what got me interested initially, was the deprivation of civil rights. At the time I can't believe we didn't see it.

KANEMOTO: Well, since I saw you I received my redress letter saying that according to the summation they have, I am ineligible for redress. So what



they're saying is if I had any proof otherwise that this is not so, to support it with other documents, whatever adheres to it. I still feel as a thirteen-year old what could I have done? I had no choice.

ROBERTS: Is that the basis of the case, because you went back to . . .

KANEMOTO: . . . I went to Japan with my parents. Where could I have gone? I know parents are responsible for the minors, but this is a civil rights [issue]. They initially took my citizen's rights away.

ROBERTS: You never lost your citizenship, is that right?

KANEMOTO: They never came out and said I lost it. Because when I decided to come back [to the United States] in '48, I had no problem. I went to the American Embassy in Kobe and I had no problem.

ROBERTS: So you were still an American citizen.

KANEMOTO: Right, right. And my two younger brothers, did I mention, they served in the Korean War. They volunteered into the [United States] army and my brother who's two years younger, Bob, was the one who [was the first United States citizen to] volunteer [in Japan]. They were more than happy



to take him, because of the language. The Koreans spoke Japanese. It's not that he was used as a linguist, but he was in the heat of the war. Then my brother, Richard, who is six years younger than I am, he went in the tail-end of the Korean War. That way they were sent back [to the United States by serving in the United States Army]. See I remember, my cousin had to pay my way. And the other two brothers got passage back.

ROBERTS: They were still in Japan when the Korean War broke out?

KANEMOTO: Right.

ROBERTS: And they volunteered for the United States Armed service?

KANEMOTO: Uh-huh.

ROBERTS: Oh, I see.

KANEMOTO: So they have their GI bill.

ROBERTS: Do they qualify for redress?

KANEMOTO: They don't.

ROBERTS: They don't either.

KANEMOTO: It's kind of ironic that just because we went to Japan, I understand that parents aren't



responsible for alot of decisions of a child, in this case, it was the citizen rights that were denied. It just doesn't sit right with me.

ROBERTS: Are you going to pursue it?

KANEMOTO: Well, I don't know. I'm going to see Carol about this. The thing with the money, my father did have that education insurance, I never got, that went to the pot [Alien Custodian Trust Fund]. That was certainly out of his own pocket that he had paid the premium on. When it became mature it just went to the Alien Property Fund.

ROBERTS: That was another question I have, all the business and cars went to the government. The government confiscated it. You mentioned the house was sold and there was a couple of thousand dollars.

KANEMOTO: Right.

ROBERTS: Now, did that go to the cousin's whose name it was in or to your father?

KANEMOTO: Right, no to the cousin, because he was in uniform [and it was in his name]. He was already in the Army. So of course they couldn't violate that.

ROBERTS: Right.



KANEMOTO: He was an artist and he was in a down period. [  
[ ] [So he used it for his personal  
needs.]

[End Tape 4, Side A]

[Begin Tape 4, Side B]

[ ]  
ROBERTS: I wasn't sure if it had gone to your father,  
which I thought would be kind of strange.

KANEMOTO: So again, my father was paying on the house. He  
didn't even think about it, he was just wiped  
out. I think these are the things that really  
made my father decide there's nothing in  
Seattle, he lost his business, he lost his face  
because all the employees he had he could never  
give them a job. What do you do?

ROBERTS: Is it a disgrace in the sense of honor? To be in  
prison and questioned like that?

KANEMOTO: I don't think he took it as a disgrace. Because  
like we said, we all rationalize that it was  
because you're a community leader, this is why  
you're a suspect. He was a leader, they had the  
Kenji [Kenjin Kai] Prefecture club [support  
groups], Hiroshima, Okinawa, Wakayam, etc.



they all had it. My father was treasurer at that time. He kept books. He held the offices for these things.

ROBERTS: I'm sure, actively involved that's what most people want.

KANEMOTO: That's why you're civilized . . . . But deep down I know he wasn't a bad guy.

ROBERTS: Right. The fanaticism took over.

KANEMOTO: Right, right. So it just really makes it for a very interesting story. It happened because of the timing.

ROBERTS: I went to the library to try and find a book similar to your story. I mean I've read all kinds of books about internment, but none about someone who was interned and went back, well you didn't decide to go back. I couldn't find a thing.

KANEMOTO: No, no. Very few of us.

ROBERTS: You said there was two hundred of you.

KANEMOTO: Two hundred and forty. That's what I was told. So even to get an attorney now and fight it, I mean it would cost me a fortune. So it really isn't worth it, it doesn't sit right with me,



but is it worth fighting. I'm not angry. If I had to put a closure on it I'd think it was an unfair deal.

ROBERTS: I don't think it's the money, so much as it's the . . .

KANEMOTO: . . . principle. The principle. I feel fortunate. In America there are many chances. It happened when I was young, so I could recover. Which I did. I mean, I don't have the big retirement but it gave me the opportunity to go back to school and become a professional. Raise my children. They're all through the university. That . . .

ROBERTS: . . . says alot.

KANEMOTO: Yes, something I can hang onto. . . . A certain amount of pride. I thank my parents for this because of their seriousness. You have to start with education and my kids have all repeated it. They assumed by the time they finished college that's what they're suppose to do. It wasn't even a choice.

ROBERTS: It's not a question.

KANEMOTO: Yes, right. So [

] [my husband and I



feel fortunate to be able to give them this opportunity.] [Laughter] When you're young you don't take it all that seriously but . . . .

ROBERTS: It's good in some ways and in some ways it's not.

[ ]

KANEMOTO: Life has been good to me because time has given me that second and third chance.

ROBERTS: Well, I'm really surprised, I've interviewed Mr. Taketa and talked to a few other people, I think I would be angry. It surprises me that you don't seem angry.

KANEMOTO: I try not to be. See I'm alone, so I don't get fueled by saying "do something about it." My husband is from Hawaii, so he's not involved with the so-called evacuation or redress. So I don't think he's as emotionally involved as I am. I just feel, hey somebody used us as a bargaining tool when they made that deal for the redress. I just feel that we're the bargaining [chip]. Well not everybody, but we'll just put them in this pile. I mean you always have to compromise. I just feel we were probably used as the compromise to get these senators and people



to approve the redress. They did a great job to bring the redress this far. Everybody's appreciative. For a small person like me to stir it up again I just don't feel I have that kind of energy.

ROBERTS: I still feel it's wrong [Laughter].

KANEMOTO: [Laughter].

ROBERTS: I'm writing a letter to my senator. This is a bad deal I think.

KANEMOTO: Yea, because we're singled out.

ROBERTS: Now the two hundred and forty were they all juveniles?

KANEMOTO: Yes, minors, so-called minors.

ROBERTS: They really had no control. What were they going to do, stay here and take care of themselves at the age of thirteen and be left in a camp.

KANEMOTO: My brother, neither my brothers had the [Inaudible] but when it comes to the money why it's not even half a plane. For some that's a whole year's pay or even more. So they say, wow that's alot. But when you come to think about four years taken away plus starting all over with all the losses you've had, it's really a very token amount.



ROBERTS: Oh yea, twenty thousand is nothing.

KANEMOTO: Token, maybe it's just the way you look at it. I think when I do feel I'm singled out . . .

ROBERTS: . . . well you are with two hundred and thirty-nine other people for something your parents chose to do.

KANEMOTO: I don't feel I have the energy to write to the Pacific Citizens, which is the Japanese American Citizen's League paper saying where are you, the rest of you, two hundred and thirty-nine people, let's start a class-action suit. I guess that's one way, the legal way, to do it. I'm just not that political of a person, maybe it's not right of me. My son studied legal studies at Berkeley and he gets upset. He thought he was going to go into law school and this is why he was taking the legal studies. He had some legal classes. He did take alot of my papers [appeals letters] that I had prepared.<sup>1</sup> It's not that I haven't done, I have written to [Congressman Robert] Matsui. I have written to Senator [Daniel]

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<sup>1</sup>Later my son and his legal friends spent many hours writing my appeals letter to the Office of Redress Administration for which I am very grateful.



Inouye. I'm not getting too much. They're just saying the way it is now, I am ineligible [the climate is not right]. That's the way it's written. I'm just one of [many].

ROBERTS: Well, they haven't even started handing out the redress yet.

KANEMOTO: They did.

ROBERTS: Oh they did.

KANEMOTO: The last year. I happened to be the first one of the third group. See, in a few years they were going to pay it up. In three years they were going to pay it up. There's two years already, people after aged sixty-four have been paid, I'm sixty-three, so it starts with sixty four.

ROBERTS: By age-wise?

KANEMOTO: By age wise, chronological in all fairness. I happen to be January, so I did get two communications already. They [Office Redress Administration] wanted more information to verify that I'm living here and I had to send my birth certificate and everything else. They said, when did I come back from Japan again, I wrote that all down again and they said well you're ineligible. Does it help for you to have



this kind of letter? [Interruption] The government could waste so much paper.

[Inaudible] Two sheets of paper came in this huge thing.

ROBERTS: It's about right for the government.

KANEMOTO: This is the insurance, my husband said why didn't you show it to me, well it doesn't make any difference. This is the insurance money and then you see it was going to be due in 1946, maturity date.

ROBERTS: Oh, this is the one your father bought for you.

KANEMOTO: Yes, right. You just kind of bury these things. I filled it out again, this is that insurance money. It does say why I don't get it, because of enemy regulations [payable to my father at maturity] and a demand for payment [to the Alien Property Fund].

ROBERTS: Oh I see when it came due. They sent you a notice saying . . .

KANEMOTO: . . . saying that I'm suppose to get it [if my father was deceased]. Are you interested in these?

ROBERTS: Oh, if you wouldn't mind.



KANEMOTO: Oh, okay. Upon the basis of sex this is further reserved. See, so all of this went to that pot [Alien Property Fund]. As set forth in your letter consideration will be given. Submit application to Secretary Treasury Department [Inaudible] insurance company transferred the maturity value of the policy to which you refer, to Marion, that's me, Tsutakawa. Provided the insurance company is otherwise prepared to enact the transaction.

ROBERTS: Here it sounds like the government was willing to let you have the money, is that [correct]?

KANEMOTO: No.

ROBERTS: Well considerations will be given [if your father was not alive].

KANEMOTO: Okay, this was something I pursued once I was in going into nursing school. I went into the nursing school in '48. That was one of the reasons why I went to nursing school, because I had no money. The money that I had planned on, it was gone, this is gone. In those days, going to nursing school, you kind of worked your way. So this is why that was a way out.



[Interruption] I was on the ward and I had already responded to my husband. This is the letter. [Inaudible]

ROBERTS: This is saying that you're ineligible. Is this the final review?

KANEMOTO: Yes, but I mean, I'm suppose to say I put a closure on it and I will not be interested, but I am interested. I'm not going to sign. Well this is the town when I worked for the Army Hospital in Kyoto. She wrote me a letter of recommendation. The thing is, when I was there in Japan in the college, there were jobs. There were American occupation forces who were asking for people who were bilingual to come out and help because of the language barrier. So I got a job right away. I worked as an assistant librarian. I actually relieved this army librarian. I was able to do the job, but then my pay was what thirty-six dollars, thirty-nine dollars a month, that was top indigenous pay. There was another librarian ahead of her with a little bit higher rank and she told me "Marion, go home, if you can go back to the United States." I listened to them.



ROBERTS: This is the librarian [Shirley Welshinger] with the mother in Florida.

KANEMOTO: Yes, in Florida. She said, "Marion, if you can go back you can stay with my mother." It makes you think how wonderful. This is truly American. There are so many wonderful people and you know we were at war with them. They didn't see that at all. By then they accepted me for what I was, an U.S. citizen and they felt sorry for me. They understood the situation. She wrote this letter for me. For a short time, I was doing her job. As I was leaving, she wanted to write that letter for me. I was corresponding with her. She was not a well person. She's Catholic. She had about six children. I corresponded with many of them for several years, the one in Florida I kind of lost her. I'm just wondering, about three or four years ago, of course you have to remember she was already close to retirement age and I was still twenty, something might have happened. Relatives don't usually go out and send notices. I'm afraid I've lost the first one [Shirley Welshinger]. This one [Rosemary Lang] I



KANEMOTO: think maybe, I know where her family is.

[ ]

. . . it did not seem completely impossible, the class-action suit. It's just so heavy duty. On the golf course I don't think about that.

[Laughter]

ROBERTS: That's why you go golfing.

KANEMOTO: I think so. I really respond with the grass. I don't know what's going to come of it.

ROBERTS: Hopefully it'll all turn out right.

KANEMOTO: Well, I attended a Japanese college. Even though I tried to do the best for me, when I turned eighteen, I don't think I could have entered any better college. I thought at least in English, I can expand my English and prefect it a little bit more, bilingually. There was an opportunity for me when I was stronger in both languages, I could have worked for the government. This was my first year at the Doshisha College that I was attending.

ROBERTS: Now, is that in . . .

KANEMOTO: . . . Kyoto. My mother encouraged me to go to the city and see the better part of Japan.

ROBERTS: So did you ever finish the year there?



KANEMOTO: Yes, the year 1946. From then I worked at the Army hospital for about one and a half years. It really wasn't getting me anywhere, because with that nominal amount of pay, I wasn't able to save money to even sail back to the United States. But then again, I found my way back. Then there was another way to go to Minnesota and work for the nuns. When I look back on it, alot of my high school classmates accepted the life of secretaries and they're happy. [Inaudible] Because I went to nursing school, I never had trouble finding a job. That's the proof that education will always be your key to success.

ROBERTS: That's the way out.

KANEMOTO: That's the way out. Even though I had to go back to a State College and redo alot of my schooling, but then again, that gave me the chance to become a [university] graduate. It's not that they're giving you all the answers but at least they know how to prepare you to research or find new avenues in life. [A couple of paragraphs were deleted because the



information discussed within them had been presented before.]

KANEMOTO: As I look back on it now, more than looking for the future. Keep in mind, it took me thirteen years to get my college degree on top of my nursing diploma. I was a R.N., a registered nurse, but then I stuck it out while raising my family. That's why it was really good taking a class or two per semester.

ROBERTS: So you ended up with a bachelors?

KANEMOTO: Bachelors plus a credential, which is equivalent now to a master's program in school nursing. You have to have a credential to work in a public school.

ROBERTS: That's what your bachelors was in, school nursing?

KANEMOTO: Nursing. But then I had to go more for the school credential.

ROBERTS: So you had to get your nursing bachelors and credential from the state college, plus back in Minnesota you attended school for . . .

KANEMOTO: . . . that was for the R.N. [Registered Nurse] [diploma]. That's hospital nursing, so now today they call that status a technician. So now I can



call myself a professional because I have a degree. It was a good excuse to go to college and pluck away a class at a time. And by the time you're worn out and say is this worth it, you add up your units and gee you're getting close.

ROBERTS: Right, I know that feeling. Half way through the semester I think, god I'm so tired.

KANEMOTO: Hang in there, any inspiration at all, it works, just hang in there. They can't take it away from you, that's one thing they can't. All of it now prepares me to do something, not just golfing. I do volunteering here. It's the human relation part of it, getting along with people [and doing for others].

ROBERTS: Do you conduct oral histories yourself? Do you interview people yourself?

KANEMOTO: I have. [Several, especially the bilingual ones.]

ROBERTS: For the JACL?

KANEMOTO: The [Florin Chapter] JACL. I can show you some, do you have the time?

ROBERTS: Yea. As long as you do.

[End Tape 4, Side B]



## NAMES LIST

Florin Japanese American Citizens League  
Oral History Project

Narrator: Marion Kanemoto  
 Interviewer: Debbie Roberts

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George Joji Tsutakawa	Father of Marion Kanemoto	Marion Kanemoto	3
George Tsutakawa	First cousin of Marion Kanemoto	Marion Kanemoto	7
Dr. Ide	Physician	Marion Kanemoto	10
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Kenbo Moriguchi	Second cousin of Marion Kanemoto	Marion Kanemoto	92
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Daniel Inouye	Hawaiian Senator	Debbie Roberts	150



## EPILOGUE

As I reviewed this manuscript, I had after-thoughts which I wanted to express. First, how lucky I was to have had my bicultural exposure, ie., my parents' Japanese culture and my American culture. Also, how fortunate I was to have the many relatives and friends who "were there" to support me throughout the years. They were all so important in shaping my life. America is a wonderful country -- it has given me the chance to grow and recover after hard times. In spite of all the reminders of our current social ills, we can still surround ourselves with very caring people who listen with their hearts and think with their heads.

I am grateful for this opportunity to share my life story as an American. I hope to continue to grow and model my life through my many acquaintances whom I admire. I can leave my story behind without regrets. Although, to this date I have been denied redress because restrictive language in the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 failed to recognize the hardship and injustice experienced by the interned American children who had no choice but to accompany their parents and relocate to Japan during the war (and be counted as "exchange prisoners"), I have hope and faith that justice will be done sooner or later in my case. In any case, I am, and always have been, a loyal and proud American. I am glad that the lessons learned from the mistreatment of the Japanese Americans during World War II is "on the records" and "in the books".

I have been fortunate to be blessed with a close-knit family. My husband Jim has been my partner for 42 plus years and has given me support with love, stability, and understanding. My success overall, will be reflected in my children whom my husband and I have raised. It wasn't easy, and we were not perfect, but like most parents, you do your best, as they are our extensions. Our four children, Ryusanne Chiyo, Arleen Yasu, Laurie Jo and Ames Joji are my best friends, and I am really proud of them. They have done very well so far, each in their own way, and I know they will do better as time goes by.

Finally, I would like to thank Debbie Roberts for the many many hours she spent on this oral history project. She is one of those exceptional people who value human rights and who has the keen insight of how people's lives become building blocks in history. I wish her every success in her goals as a college history instructor.

Marion Kanemoto  
July 1994



# Internees Two Times Wronged

As Detainees Observe  
Day of Remembrance,  
Some Seek Redress for  
Little-Known 'Trade'

By Evantheia Schibsted

Special to the Daily Journal

On a balmy day in September 1943, Seattle-born Marion Tsutakawa Kanemoto exited a cruise liner in Goa, India, and looked across the dock at her fellow Americans as they got off a Japanese military ship.

The two groups waved to each other and exchanged tentative smiles.

Kanemoto, a 15-year-old U.S. citizen, did not understand fully that she was being traded as an internee by her own country.

"It was not a happy time," said Kanemoto, 65, a native of Seattle who now lives in Sacramento. "It seemed somber. I had a very strange feeling because I didn't know what I was going to be facing."

Kanemoto's story and that of others involved in an unusual World War II-era prisoner exchange program between the United States and Japan — unknown to even most other Japanese-American internees — has surfaced in U.S. District Court in San Jose. Most of the plaintiffs are originally from the Bay Area.

A total of 14 plaintiffs are seeking reparations — already given to thousands of internees, but denied these Japanese-Americans because of their unusual circumstances.

"Here are people who have been twice wronged. Not only were they interned, but essentially deported by the government, exchanged for other citizens who were not of Japanese descent," said Owen J. Clements, a Morrison & Foerster associate who represents the 14 Japanese-Americans.

"Imagine how it would feel as an 8-year-old to be imprisoned by your own country and then sent to a foreign country. Imagine how it feels approximately 50 years later that that's the ground for denying redress."

The federal government has denied reparations because the children's parents agreed to go back to Japan. Redress has only been given to Japanese-Americans who remained in the United States.

Clements, with Morrison partner James F. McCabe, and cocounsel Gen Fujioka, staff attorney with the Asian Law Caucus, filed suit in September on behalf of Kanemoto; her

Continued on Page 7



MARION KANEMOTO



DIANA M. SMITH

**MARION TSUTAKAWA KANEMOTO** — "It was not a happy time. I had a very strange feeling because I didn't know what I was going to be facing," says the former Minidoka, Idaho, detention camp internee — shown above with her brothers, Robert and Richard, and her mother Yachiyo, in 1942 — of being exchanged for other American citizens in Japan.



# 'Exchange' Citizens Seek Redress

Continued From Page 1

brothers, Richard and Robert Tsutakawa; and 11 other plaintiffs who were part of the exchange. The complaint, *Kanemoto v. Barr*, C92-20610JW, challenges the reasons these people were denied reparations.

"If anything, these children deserve more redress, not less," McCabe said.

"The U.S. government used these children to get back to the United States adults it cared about. And for having participated in that involuntary exchange the government wants to deny redress."

The Justice Department is not commenting on the litigation.

"As a matter of policy the Department of Justice does not comment on ongoing litigation," said O'Brien Rainey, spokeswoman for the department.

□

Kanemoto's internment story began like that of other internees whose lives were upended Feb. 19, 1942, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 authorizing the removal and detention of Japanese-Americans from their homes.

Early on the morning of Feb. 22, 1942, four FBI agents barged into the young girl's home in Seattle, Wash.

After slashing the furniture with knives, ripping pictures from the family photo album, and confiscating money and receipts belonging to the lucrative family-owned import-export and grocery business, the agents hauled off young Marion's father, George Tsutakawa, Kanemoto said.

The senior Tsutakawa was behind bars for more than 18 months without any formal charges brought against him.

"When I went back to school on Monday, one of my friends showed me a picture of my father on the front page of the Seattle Post-Intelligencer," Kanemoto said. She recalled the headlines implying her father and more than 100 other Japanese-Americans were rounded up as suspected spies. "I was shocked," she said.

Tsutakawa, a successful, respectable member of the Seattle community, had been reduced to a prisoner clutching a brown paper bag, holding his only worldly possessions.

After a brief visit a week later, Marion did not see her father again for nearly two years.

Shortly after her father's arrest, Marion; her mother, Yachiyo Tsutakawa; and her two younger brothers, Robert, age 12, and Richard, age 7, reported to the relocation assembly center at the Puyallup, Wash., fairgrounds.

After three or four months of living in makeshift barracks, the family was herded onto a train bound for what would be their home for the next year and a half — the Minidoka internment camp in Idaho.

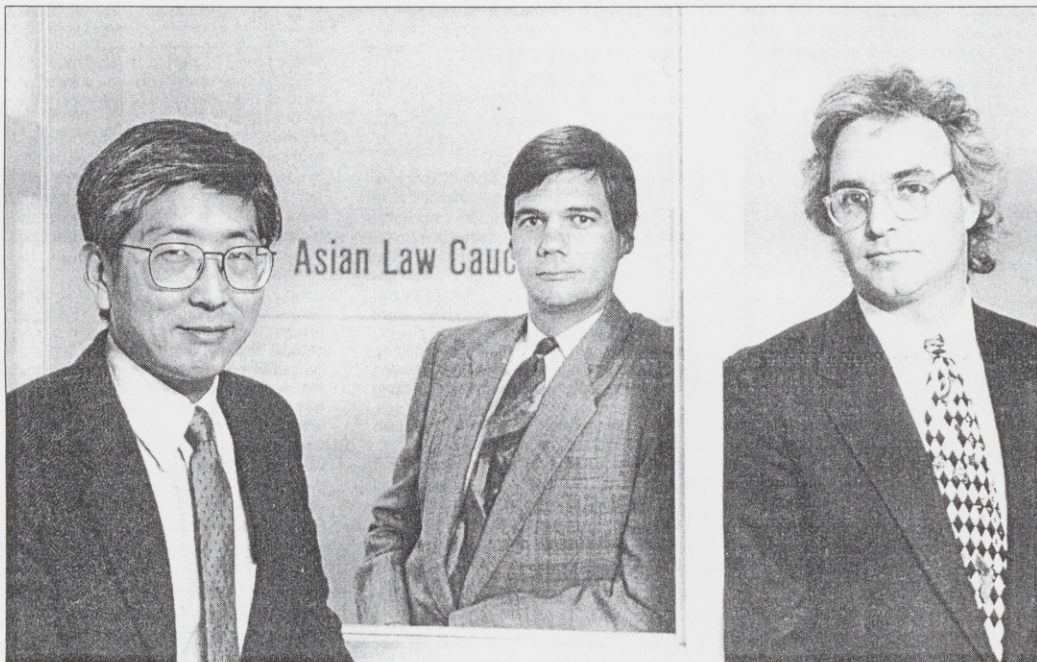
"We were told to pull down the shades [when we boarded the train] so we wouldn't know where we were going," Kanemoto said.

She remembers living with the uncertainty of whether her family would ever be together again.

□

Her family was finally reunited in September 1943, soon after Marion's father agreed to repatriate as part of a prisoner exchange. The family was brought together in New York to board the Swedish cruise liner S.S. Gripsholm, bound for Japan.

The exchange was made possible when the Japanese and American governments agreed to the trade several days after the Dec. 7, 1941, Japanese attack on Pearl



ERIC SLOMANSON

**GEN FUJIOKA** — "Look at the situation of these children: We're talking about patriotic American children caught by this exchange policy," says the Asian Law Caucus attorney,

who is pursuing redress claims for 14 plaintiffs, with his co-counsel, Owen J. Clements, center, and James F. McCabe, both of Morrison & Foerster.

Harbor.

The Japanese and U.S. governments chose who would be exchanged.

"Our basic understanding was initially the Japanese-Americans were put on a list because the Japanese government put their names on the list," said Fujioka. Fujioka said many people still do not know why they were chosen.

In addition to requests for consulate officials and other government staffers, Japanese-Americans who were sent to Japan included businessmen, employees of Japanese national companies and also some people who had relatives in Japan.

He said more than 50 percent of the people the Japanese government requested to return turned down the offer.

Facing the prospect of being interned for an indefinite period in the United States and in some instances being separated from family members, some of them voluntarily made a decision to go to Japan.

"We can't speak to all the individual decisions. We will probably never know how a father in prison made the decision 50 years ago," Fujioka said.

Of the Americans who returned to the United States as a result of the exchange, none were of Japanese descent. The group was made up of U.S. government officials, missionaries, newspaper reporters and other civilians.

In June 1942, the S.S. Gripsholm set sail from New York with 54 individuals from the internment camps. In September 1943, a second and final trip was made carrying 314 people, including 149 American citizens, predominantly children of the permanent resident aliens, according to "Prejudice, War and the Constitution," by Jacobus tenBroek, Edward N. Barnhart and Floyd W. Matson.

Once in Japan, the Japanese-Americans were not imprisoned. However, they always felt like outsiders because they were Americans in a foreign country, several said.

"I tried to remember the good things," said Louise Watanabe Tung, a San Francisco native and one of the plaintiffs, now living in Austin, Texas. "I missed good ice cream, my friends. I wondered what hap-

pened to them. I missed the freedom to say what you want. What I regretted the most was not being able to finish the eighth grade. I looked forward so much to graduating. That would have been the highlight of my life."

□

The Civil Liberties Act of 1988, signed by President Reagan, was designed to acknowledge and correct the "injustice of the evacuation, relocation and internment" of Japanese-Americans during World War II. The bill entitled all citizens and permanent resident aliens of Japanese ancestry interned during the war or otherwise deprived of liberty to an individual compensation of \$20,000.

However, Kanemoto and the 148 other Japanese-American citizens who were minors during World War II and who were involved in the prisoner-of-war exchange do not, according to the government, qualify for the compensation.

The denial hinges on the U.S. Department of Justice's interpretation of a provision that excludes eligibility of any individual who during World War II — Dec. 7, 1941, to Sept. 2, 1945 — relocated to a country while the United States was at war with that country.

"When the Civil Liberties Act was being considered, a proposal was made to make redress payments to any person who was interned," said Morrison partner McCabe. "The Department of Justice objected to that, pointing out there were some persons who upon being interned became actively anti-U.S. and pro-Japanese." Those who left were considered disloyal, he said.

But children of those who went — for whatever reason — never renounced their citizenship. As minors, their loyalty could hardly be an issue, the attorneys said.

Evelyn F. Akiyama, a plaintiff who was born in Alameda and resides in Sacramento, wrote in her individual claim in the suit: "At no time in this odyssey did I ever renounce my American citizenship. Nor did I ever give up my desire to live in the United States, despite the injustices we

experienced here."

"The [U.S.] War Relocation Authority had on its books that minors be consulted and be given the opportunity to stay within the United States," McCabe said. "It was not applied in the camps."

"It is unfair to exclude us from redress just because we were sent to Japan," Kanemoto said. "Under the Constitution, minors are protected. We were lost in the shuffle."

"We were aware but so helpless," she said. "It's difficult when you know your parents were not wrong either. They didn't have proof my father was a spy. I don't think the children should bear the sins of the father. But in this case, my father did not sin. If we had not been evacuated, we would never have left."

McCabe and Clements first heard about the plaintiffs last August from Lisa Oyama, a former Morrison associate who is a member of the Asian Law Caucus board. They agreed to take the case on a pro bono basis.

□

For decades Marion Kanemoto remained silent.

"I haven't had the occasion to share this," Kanemoto said. "You bury it because it is bad news. You have a tendency to look forward. Because that's the only thing you could do to survive."

Attorney Fujioka, who has been working on redress issues, is not surprised by her silence.

"These experiences, by and large, were kept very private," Fujioka said. "There's an unfortunate sense of stigma, guilt by association. This is the assumption we're challenging in this case. When you look at the situation of these children — we're talking about patriotic American children caught by this exchange policy."

Kanemoto wants an apology more than she wants a reparations check.

"I carry that funny feeling that we didn't do anything wrong but we still haven't received an apology," Kanemoto said. "I want an apology and to be treated as a citizen who did no wrong."



COPY

Marion M. Kanemoto  
40 Shoreline Circle  
Sacramento, CA 95831  
(916) 422-8252  
July 7, 1992 [w/ correction August 18, 1992]

Assistant Attorney General of the  
Civil Rights Division  
United States Department of Justice  
P.O. Box 65808  
Washington, D.C. 20035-5808

Re: Redress Appeal  
Marion M. (Tsutakawa) Kanemoto  
File Number 64233

Dear Sir or Madam:

On behalf of Mrs. Marion Kanemoto ("Appellant"), we respectfully request review of the determination by the United States Department of Justice, Office of Redress Administration (the "ORA") dated May 6, 1992 that Appellant is ineligible to receive compensation under Section 105 of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, 50 U.S.C. app. 1989 (the "Act"). Appellant received a letter from the ORA informing her that she was ineligible based on C.F.R. Part 74.4 of the regulations enforcing Section 105 of the Act which provides that:

The term "eligible individual" does not include any individual who, during the period beginning on December 7, 1941, and ending on September 2, 1945, relocated to a country while the United States was at war with that country.

The letter states that pursuant to the "restrictive language" of the Act and the regulations, the ORA concluded that she was not eligible for compensation.



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However, it is evident that the Department has given the term "relocated" a much broader application than is consistent with the legislative intent of the Act, as based on its legislative history. The term "relocated" was intended to exclude only those who demonstrated disloyalty to the United States or petitioned for repatriation to Japan, and therefore, is not consistent with the facts of Appellant's case. If the exclusion were applied as intended, it would not be applicable to the Appellant, who (1) as a minor, was given no choice in deciding whether or not she would be relocated to Japan and (2) as a loyal American citizen to this day, never "repatriated" to Japan.

#### I. FACTUAL SUMMARY

Appellant was born on January 3, 1928 in Seattle, Washington to George and Yachiyo Tsutakawa. Appellant lived in Seattle with her parents, older brother, James, and two younger brothers, Robert and Richard, for the duration of her childhood.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Tsutakawa supported his family by working with two of his brothers as the owners-operators of Tsutakawa & Co., an import/export business, and Pacific Market, a large grocery store located in Seattle's Japanese community. As a respected businessman in the Japanese American community, Mr. Tsutakawa also served as treasurer of the Okayama Province immigrant's association.

Shortly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, several men, identified as being from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), entered the Tsutakawa residence at 7:00 a.m. and began searching the house. In conducting the search, the FBI men slashed pieces of furniture, and confiscated money and receipts from the family business and photos from the family album. Without making any charges against him, the FBI took Mr. Tsutakawa into custody; he would not see his family for more than one and a half years later, and never receive a government apology for his imprisonment.

<sup>1</sup> James Tsutakawa was sent to Okayama, Japan, to live with his paternal grandmother in 1936.



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In addition to the loss of, and damage to, the Tsutakawa's property caused by the FBI search, the remainder of the family's valuables were sold for a fraction of their value -- including a piano that was sold for \$15 -- when the family was ordered to evacuate from the area. Other assets that were held by third parties, such as bank accounts and insurance policies, were frozen or confiscated by the government and turned over to the Alien Property Custodian Account, never to be recovered. The family business built by Mr. Tsutakawa and his brothers over the course of many years was lost completely.

In April of 1942, Mrs. Tsutakawa and her three children were ordered to report for evacuation. Like all other Americans of Japanese ancestry that cooperated with Executive Order 9066, Appellant, at the age of 13, reported to the specified location with only two suitcases of belongings. Appellant, her mother and two younger brothers were bussed to the Puyallup County Fairgrounds, where they lived in makeshift housing for three months. Subsequently, they were sent by train through the desert and under cover of night to the internment center in Minidoka, Idaho. There, behind the barbed wire, they lived for the duration of their internment, as Government personnel regulated the Tsutakawa family's every activity, including the censorship of letters to and from Appellant's father. Because of the severely limited communication between Appellant's family and her father, there was uncertainty as to his condition and whereabouts throughout this time.

#### The Exchange

Sometime during his imprisonment away from his family, Mr. Tsutakawa learned of a government-sponsored "exchange" through which a head of household could request that he and his family be sent to Japan. The historical accounts of the "exchange" show that on August 18, 1941, the President advised that the Japanese government had barred the departure of American citizens in Japan.<sup>2</sup> Subsequently, the United States and Japanese governments entered into an agreement to exchange repatriates, pursuant to which 54 Japanese citizens embarked for

<sup>2</sup> Weglyn, Years of Infamy (1976) ("Infamy") at 55.



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Japan on the S.S. Gripsholm in June 1942.<sup>3</sup> Beginning in July 1942, the Wartime Civil Control Administration and the War Relocation Authority ("WRA") attempted to canvass all Japanese citizens, wherever located in the United States, and all adults in the internment camps, regarding their willingness to be repatriated.<sup>4</sup>

Having been imprisoned and isolated from his family for more than one and a half years without any certainty of ever again seeing his wife and children in the internment center -- or eldest child in Japan -- Mr. Tsutakawa indicated his willingness to participate in this "exchange" in order to reunite the family. Three hundred fourteen out of a pool of approximately two thousand interested persons were selected to set sail for Japan on the S.S. Gripsholm in September 1943.<sup>5,6</sup> Mr. Tsutakawa was one among the group and in early September of 1943, nineteen months after he was taken away by the FBI, was reunited with his family at the Minidoka internment center. There, Mr. Tsutakawa informed his family that they would be leaving for Japan.

#### Appellant's Life in a Foreign Land

After their 86 day journey from the United States, the Tsutakawa family arrived in Yokohama, Japan. They then travelled by train to Okayama, where Appellant's grandmother and oldest brother, James, were living. While this was somewhat of a homecoming for Mr. and Mrs. Tsutakawa, it was the beginning of Appellant's immersion into a foreign country. She did not read or write Japanese, and was ostracized by some of her peers for

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of War, Final Report, Japanese Evacuation from the West Coast (1942) ("Final Report") at 311; Jacobus tenBrock, Barnhart & Matson, Prejudice, War and the Constitution (1954) ("Prejudice") at 174-75.

<sup>4</sup> Final Report at 312-26; Prejudice at 175.

<sup>5</sup> Final Report at 317-18, Prejudice at 175.

<sup>6</sup> See also Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians ("Commission"), Personal Justice Denied (1982) ("Personal Justice Denied") at 251.



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being American. Nonetheless, Appellant adjusted to wartime life in Japan, learning the language and becoming accustomed to seeing bombing runs by U.S. planes.

After the end of the war, Mr. Tsutakawa served as a volunteer liaison to the Japanese police to facilitate the American occupation. Appellant graduated from high school in 1946, and went on to college as an English major under the sponsorship of the American Congregational Church. She left college after one semester to work as a bilingual assistant librarian for the U.S. Army Hospital. Although she remained an American citizen, she was classified as an "indigenous" employee and had to accept a pay scale substantially lower than that of non-"indigenous" employees.

#### Post-War Return to the United States

Appellant borrowed some money from relatives who had resettled in Seattle, Washington, and returned to the United States on February 28, 1948 in order to continue her college education. Although her father had set aside funds prior to the war for her education, Appellant discovered that these funds had been confiscated by the government as a result of the internment. Unable to gain access to these funds, Appellant borrowed additional money from relatives and enrolled in a Minnesota nursing school (which was less expensive than the University of Washington, which she had planned to attend). In 1951, she graduated from nursing school and became a head nurse at St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester, Minnesota. The following year, she married James Kanemoto, then an engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The couple moved to Washington, D.C. in April of 1952, primarily to research the status of her father's insurance policies that were intended to fund her education, but had been confiscated and had become a part of the Alien Property Custodian Account. Their efforts yielded no explanation for the disappearance of these funds.

Subsequently, Appellant's husband was assigned as a civilian engineer on the U.S. Army base in Okinawa. During their seven years residence on the island, Appellant worked as a full-time nurse for an American company, then for the U.S. Armed Services schools, and also volunteered as a health educator for



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the American Red Cross. Appellant and her husband also started their family with the birth of two daughters. In 1956, Appellant's parents were able to return to the United States under Mr. Kanemoto's sponsorship. Both intended to become naturalized U.S. citizens; unfortunately, Appellant's father died of stomach cancer a year later and never realized his dream of citizenship. Appellant's mother became a U.S. citizen in 1960. During that same year, Appellant's husband obtained a transfer back to the United States mainland. The Kanemoto family settled in California, where Appellant gave birth to another daughter and a son. In 1970, the Kanemotos moved to Sacramento where Appellant worked as a school nurse until her retirement in 1988. Appellant and her husband continue to reside in Sacramento.

## II. ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE DETERMINATION OF INELIGIBILITY

Congress enacted the Civil Liberties Act of 1988<sup>7</sup> in order to, among other things,

acknowledge the fundamental injustice of the evacuation, relocation, and internment of United States citizens and permanent resident aliens . . . [and to] make restitution to those individuals of Japanese ancestry who were interned.

Consistent with this purpose, and in consideration of applications such as the Appellant's, the Department of Justice is directed to

review with liberality, giving full consideration to the findings of the Commission and the statement of Congress [cited above], any application by an eligible individual for . . . restitution. [Emphasis added.]<sup>8</sup>

Appellant, a native-born citizen of the United States who was interned pursuant to Executive Order 9066 and who suffered losses of liberty without due process of law, is clearly the

<sup>7</sup> Pub. L. 100-383, 102 Stat. 903, codified at 50 U.S.C. app. 1989.

<sup>8</sup> 50 U.S.C. app. 1989b-2.



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type of individual the Act was intended to compensate. Notwithstanding, the Department has denied Appellant redress based on Section 108 of the Act which provides the following:

the term "eligible individual" does not include any individual who, during the period beginning on December 7, 1941, and ending on September 2, 1945, relocated to a country while the United States was at war with that country. [Emphasis added.]

The Department has apparently construed this exclusionary clause in the broadest sense without recognizing that the term "relocate" is ambiguous on its face when considering Appellant's circumstances in relation to the statute's purpose and legislative history. Consequently, the Department's application of the exclusion is in a manner which is inconsistent with the legislative intent of the Act.

The ORA's letter of May 6 offers no discussion for its broad interpretation to exclude loyal native-born citizen minors who were relocated to Japan without choice. Nor does it comment on any of the issues Appellant raised in her response of January 6, 1992, regarding the inequities of the interpretation with the basic principles of justice for which the purposes of the Act are designed to address, and, that Appellant suffered additionally from her removal from her country of birth as a result of her internment. The only indication for the interpretation, thus far, comes from John R. Dunne, Assistant Attorney General Civil Rights Division,<sup>9</sup> in response to Appellant's inquiry in 1988<sup>10</sup> to the Japanese American Citizens League for specific clarification of the Act as it pertains to her eligibility. That letter received through House Representative Robert Matsui's office simply offers

the preamble to the Act's Regulations states that "the exclusionary language of the Act would preclude from eligibility the minors, as well as adults, who were relocated to Japan during that particular time period."

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<sup>9</sup> See Exhibit A.

<sup>10</sup> See Exhibit B.



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But, examination of the "preamble" mentioned, Department of Justice 28 CFR Part 74, provides no reasoning itself for the broad interpretation of exclusion to U.S. citizen minors other than a circuitous reference to the Act's "restrictive language."<sup>11</sup> This is despite the preamble's discussion of the eligibility of several other groups for whom the restrictive language of the Act would also exclude were it not for further review in consideration of the purposes and intent of the Act. Accordingly, as it is the Department's responsibility to review the application by an eligible individual with "liberality" and "giving full-consideration" to the findings of Congress, it is only appropriate that the interpretation of the exclusion as it applies to Appellant be given more comprehensive review.

- A. The exclusionary language contained in Section 108 of the Act applies to persons who, unlike the Appellant, were disloyal to the United States or repatriated to an enemy country.

Since the term "relocate" in the clause is not preceded by any qualifier indicating the scienter required, it is unclear by mere construction of the clause itself whether Congress intended to deny reparations to every person moving to Japan regardless of that person's state of mind or capacity at the time. Nevertheless, examination of the term "relocated," of course, connotes a voluntary act in the sentence "I relocated to Japan," but may mean an involuntary act in the sentence "I was relocated to Japan." The Act's phrasing as those who "relocated to Japan" is thus consistent with the general connotation of those who affirmatively initiated the action to relocate, in contrast to the facts of Appellant's circumstances.

More importantly, any interpretation of Appellant's case, must give "full consideration" to the intent of the Act. Toward this goal, examination of the legislative records of both houses of Congress show that the only discussion for exclusion was as a result of a desire to avoid awarding the benefits of the legislation to those persons who were disloyal to the United

<sup>11</sup> Federal Register Vol. 54, No. 159 (Friday, August 18, 1989) Rules and Regulations at 34160



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States. The House Report 100-278 of August 6, 1987, provides

We . . . oppose the breadth of the definitions of eligible individuals . . . the definition would cover "any living individual" who had been subject to the exclusion, relocation, or detention, without any express exclusion of persons residing outside the United States . . . The all inclusiveness of the term "eligible individual" overlooks the important factor that at least several hundred of the detainees were fanatical pro-Japanese, had terrorized their fellow detainees loyal to the United States, and voluntarily sought repatriation to Japan after the end of the war . . . It would be unfair to the United States and to loyal persons of Japanese descent if the benefits of this legislation were available to persons who were disloyal to the United States. [Emphasis added.]<sup>12</sup>

This very same objection to the original definition of eligible individuals is repeated in Assistant Attorney General Richard K. Willard's statement presented to the Senate during consideration of Senate Bill S. 1009.<sup>13</sup> Subsequently, the bill was amended to exclude from redress those individuals who during the period from December 7, 1941, through September 2, 1945, relocated to a country at war with the United States. The record indicates no other arguments for amending the bill, and therefore, it is clear from the history of the Act that the exclusionary clause was intended only to avoid rewarding persons disloyal to the United States and those who repatriated to Japan.

B. Appellant did not voluntarily relocate to Japan.

The ORA's current determination of Appellant's ineligibility takes the position that the exclusion applies to persons who participated in the "exchange" regardless of their capacity as minors to make any affirmative decision regarding their relocation. This interpretation not only ignores that the children had no choice in the matter, but also ignores the legal distinction between the capacity of adults and of minors to make

<sup>12</sup> 134 Cong. Rec. S4396 (daily ed. April 20, 1988).

<sup>13</sup> 134 Cong. Rec. S4405 (daily ed. April 20, 1988).



decisions as held in McGrath v. Tadayasu Abo.<sup>14</sup> In the Abo case, where Japanese American internees signed renunciations of citizenship, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals held the renunciations by internees under the age of 21 to be invalid because such minors were incompetent to renounce.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, the ORA interpretation in the present case has inappropriately ignored the important issue of capacity altogether.

Furthermore, since Appellant never renounced her citizenship in contrast to the children in the Abo case, the ORA's determination of Appellant's exclusion from the benefits of the Act rests on her parent's decision to relocate her and her brothers to Japan through the government-sponsored "exchange." However, this process by which the War Relocation Authority relocated interned persons to Japan during the war was under the unfortunate misnomer of "repatriation." The procedures required merely that the "acting head of the family" sign a form on behalf of all family members. In such instances, the decision "would not be considered individually," but would be considered for the family as a whole.<sup>16</sup> Thus, it is clear that neither the WRA nor any other governmental body ever inquired as to Appellant's preference regarding the "exchange," and indeed, the process was designed to ignore the wishes of individuals within the family, particularly children. Hence, Appellant's lack of participation in the process of deciding to relocate to Japan cannot be construed now as a voluntarily affirmative act.

Therefore, the ORA's interpretation of the Act's exclusionary clause denies redress to Appellant based on her parent's conduct. This is an unnecessary injustice contrary to the purpose of the Act, as well as, established principles of law. Under the restrictive language of the Act, Appellant's father were he alive might be determined ineligible, despite his losses of liberty, as a direct result of his decision to relocate for whatever reason. But now, to deny Appellant's eligibility is to direct the onus of a parent's conduct against his children and this does not comport with fundamental

<sup>14</sup> 186 F.2d 766 (Ninth Cir. Ct. App. 1951).

<sup>15</sup> Abo at 772.

<sup>16</sup> J.L. DeWitt, Final Report, Japanese Evacuation from the West Coast, 1942 (1943) at 317.



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conceptions of justice.<sup>17</sup>

C. Appellant has always been an American citizen, entitled to the protections thereof, and has never repatriated nor has she ever been disloyal to the United States

Appellant was born an American citizen, has remained and continues to be a loyal American citizen to this day. Her journey to Japan as a child during the war was in no way an expression of her sympathies, nor was it her voluntary act to relocate to the enemy country. As all of her post-war actions illustrate,<sup>18</sup> when she reached adulthood and made her own decisions she acted as an American, choosing to work for the U.S. Army Hospital in Japan and then returning to the United States -- her country of birth -- to pursue her education and future.

In contrast, the ORA's determination continues to reinforce the overgeneralization made by the War Relocation Authority during the period of the "exchange" which purported that all persons being relocated to Japan were in effect "repatriating" to Japan regardless of their status as native-born citizens or permanent resident aliens. Such was not the case, in fact, as for Appellant who was born in Seattle, Washington, and is a citizen of the United States by right of birth. This fundamental right of jus soli ought not to be confused with any privileges which resident aliens may have enjoyed subject to revocation by the Government. There can be no doubt of Appellant's right to this protection as the concept of citizenship by birth is the law of the land, declared in the Fourteenth Amendment and further defined in United States v. Wong Kim Ark<sup>19</sup> where the Supreme Court wrote

The Fourteenth Amendment affirms the ancient and

<sup>17</sup> Plyler v. Doe, 457 U.S. 202, 72 L.Ed 2d 786 (1982).

<sup>18</sup> Facts contained herein described in further detail in letter on file to Paul Suddes, Office of Redress Administration, January 6, 1992.

<sup>19</sup> United States v. Wong Kim Ark, 169 U.S. 649 (1898).



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fundamental rule of citizenship by birth within the territory, in allegiance and under the protection of the country, including all children here born of resident aliens . . .

In the present case, this fundamental rule's relevance lies wherein the parent's conduct as a resident alien choosing to relocate his family is now being construed to deny the citizen child of the Government's acknowledgement and apology for the fundamental injustices of the Government's internment of Japanese Americans, enacted against her during her childhood.

As cited previously, the legislative history of the Act shows the exclusionary clause to be the result of an intent to exclude from redress "those persons who voluntarily sought repatriation." However, by definition, repatriation means "to restore or return to one's country of origin, allegiance, or citizenship,"<sup>20</sup> and therefore, the term is clearly inapplicable to Appellant's relocation by virtue of her origin, allegiance, and citizenship of this country since birth. Thus, in contrast to the ORA's interpretation, the legislative intent of the exclusion ought not to be applied not only due to the circumstances of Appellant's relocation, but also fundamentally due to her birthright of United States citizenship.

Even should an argument for a more precise term of "expatriation" be made against Appellant, it would be invalid as held in Perkins v. Elg<sup>21</sup>, where the Court stated

Expatriation is the voluntary renunciation or abandonment of nationality and allegiance. It has no application to the removal from this country of a native citizen during minority. In such a case the voluntary action which is of the essence of the right of expatriation is lacking . . . there is no basis for invoking the doctrine of expatriation where a native citizen who is removed to his parent's country of origin during minority returns here on his majority and elects to remain and to maintain his American citizenship.

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<sup>20</sup> Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 1979, at 972.

<sup>21</sup> Perkins v. Elg, 307 U.S. 325 (1939).



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There is no question of Appellant's loyalty, her removal to Japan as a minor, or her decision to return to the United States upon becoming an adult. She has always maintained her right to citizenship and has never committed an act or possessed any intent that could be construed to voluntarily relinquish her nationality.<sup>22</sup> Any such interpretation to the contrary is absurd. Yet, the ORA's interpretation of the Act in denying eligibility to Appellant has the sweeping effect of wrongly lumping her into a group of repatriates that Congress deemed ineligible for reasons of disloyalty. This interpretation contrasts greatly with the very spirit and intent of the law.

### III. CONCLUSION

The Department of Justice's current finding is as confounding as it is sad. By lumping together all persons who, regardless of their loyalty or capacity, had moved to Japan during the war, the Department is guilty of the same overgeneralizations for which Congress sought to acknowledge and apologize for in passing the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. While Congress has recognized the egregious injustice this country inflicted by categorizing all persons of Japanese descent as disloyal, the ORA has similarly generalized that all persons who were relocated to Japan during the war were disloyal. This is clearly inappropriate given Appellant's factual circumstances. She was and always has been a loyal American citizen; she simply had no choice as a child in the matter of being relocated to an enemy country.

In drafting the exclusionary language of the Act, it appears that Congress unfortunately did not foresee that persons such as Appellant who, as a minor, had no choice but to participate in the "exchange" and has never demonstrated any disloyalty to the United States, would be erroneously excluded under a provision intended to exclude "fanatical pro-Japanese" repatriates. Such a result is clearly inconsistent with the purpose of the Act. We urge the Department to reevaluate its broad application of

<sup>22</sup> 8 U.S.C.A. § 1481 (1992).

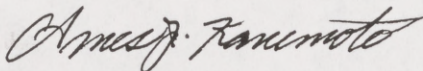


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the exclusion, and adopt the more equitable construction intended by Congress, as evidenced by the legislative history. Appellant clearly has suffered the wrongs which the Act is intended to redress. Applying the exclusion in a manner which is not supported by the legislative history would deny Appellant and others like her the redress compensation to which she is entitled.

For the reasons stated above, Marion Kanemoto respectfully requests that the May 6, 1992 decision of the ORA be reversed.

Respectfully submitted,



Ames J. Kanemoto  
(Appellant's son)

I, Marion M. (Tsutakawa) Kanemoto, born January 3, 1928, in Seattle, Washington, declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States that the facts contained herein are true and correct.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ [original signed] \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ [ July 7, 1992 ] \_\_\_\_\_



# AXIS SPY GROUPS SMASHED IN COAST RAIDS; 300 JAILED

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68 PAGES

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## NIPPONESE TAKEN IN F. B. I. ROUND-UP HERE



Here are some of the 103 Japanese rounded up by federal authorities in Seattle yesterday. All the prisoners were members of what the government said are pro-Japanese societies. The federal agents, not each prisoner, take a small amount of luggage with him, and here you see the result. The man at the left, with a suitcase; the man next, standing second at the cameraman, has a package in his arms, while others carry shopping bags. They all drove to their homes taken into the Immigration Station, 515 Alaskan Way, for detention. None seems particularly happy.

## 103 JAPS SEIZED IN SEATTLE; ALL STATE NOW DEFENSE ZONE

**Enemy Aliens Linked With Berlin, Rome And Tokyo; Four States Are Covered in Round-Up; Arms, Signaling Devices Are Seized; Governor Acts to Guard Plants**

In the greatest mass raid on fifth-columnists and suspected spies since the United States entered the war, federal agents and local law-enforcement officers on the Pacific Coast yesterday arrested more than 300 Japanese, German and Italian aliens, including 103 Japanese in Seattle.

Federal Bureau of Investigation authorities declared the surprise raids were directed at seizing money, nationalities identified with secret societies and propaganda groups operated out of Berlin, Tokyo and Rome.

The F. B. I. said prisoners taken in the coast-wide raids included members of a German labor front headed in Berlin by Dr. Robert Ley, members of an Italian organization fostering a fascist program in the United States, and Japanese who collected funds for Japanese army and navy purposes.

More than 100 federal and local officers operated in and around Seattle in the raids, which extended over Washington, Oregon, California and Arizona.

H. R. Fletcher, head of the F. B. I. here, directed the Seattle and King County raids, assisted by deputy sheriffs and police. Arresting officers said the Japanese arrested were members of organizations having pro-Japanese sympathies.

Front page, *The Seattle Sunday Times*  
Seattle, Washington  
Sunday, February 22, 1942

Appellant's father, George Tsutakawa, is pictured far right. Caption reads: "Here are some of the 103 Japanese rounded up by federal authorities... All the prisoners were members of what the government said are pro-Japanese societies... They are shown as they were taken into the Immigration Station... for detention. None seems particularly happy."

Article headline reads, "103 JAPS SEIZED IN SEATTLE; ALL STATE NOW DEFENSE ZONE... Enemy Aliens Linked With Berlin, Rome And Tokyo; Four States Are Covered in Round-Up; Arms, Signaling Devices Are Seized; Governor Acts to Guard Plants". The accompanying article states, "The F.B.I. and local authorities began the coast-wide raids almost simultaneously and were moving so fast that it was difficult to obtain an accurate determination of the number of arrests being made."

Appellant did not see her father again until more than a year and a half later in the internment camp in Minidoka, Idaho. No charges were ever made known to Mr. Tsutakawa or his family other than the general suspicion of disloyalty, nor was an apology ever offered by the Government.



April 13, 1942

Dear Marion,

Good luck and best wishes  
to a very fine pupil.

Sincerely,  
John W. Moetrant

When all these trouble some days  
are over, I'll be glad to  
have you back in our town.

Petronilla Fitzgerald  
Art. Washington

Autograph book entries from Eighth grade math teacher (top), and art teacher (bottom)  
Seattle, Washington  
April, 1942, upon leaving for internment



Marion, my dear,

I regret very, very much  
seeing you leave us and I  
do wish you the best of luck!  
always keep your sweet  
smile on your face and I'm  
sure everything will turn  
out fine for you. Don't forget  
to let me know about everything.

Marjorie Pollock

126-6<sup>th</sup> Avenue N.  
Twin Falls, Idaho

Autograph book entry from High School Core teacher  
Mindoka Internment Camp, Idaho  
September, 1943, upon being relocated to Japan

Best of Luck to You on Your  
Continuuous voyage

W. S. Gripsholm *Ericsson*  
Commander  
Oct. 1943

Autograph book entry from S.S. Gripsholm Commander  
October, 1943, aboard the "exchange" ship en route to Japan



Nov. 1945 United States Army

Thanks a lot, for the swell time  
while here in Takaya. Hoping that some  
day you will be able to return to the  
States and finish your schooling.

So until then Lots of Luck from  
me, That day from, Boston Massachusetts,

Friends Always,

Victor J. Pugliese  
33 Mass Ave  
Quincy Mass.

21 Inf  
Co. C.  
24th Div.

Autograph book entry from U.S. soldier  
Near Ibara, Japan  
November, 1945, during the U.S. occupation of Japan

Dec. 31<sup>st</sup> 45

Dearest Marion:

It has really been swell, seeing  
and knowing some one, that are the same  
as the people in the states. I hope you  
get back there soon. Lots of Luck

H.T. Co 2<sup>nd</sup> Inf.

A Very Good Friend

Dick.

Autograph book entry from U.S. soldier  
December 31, 1945, during the U.S. occupation of Japan





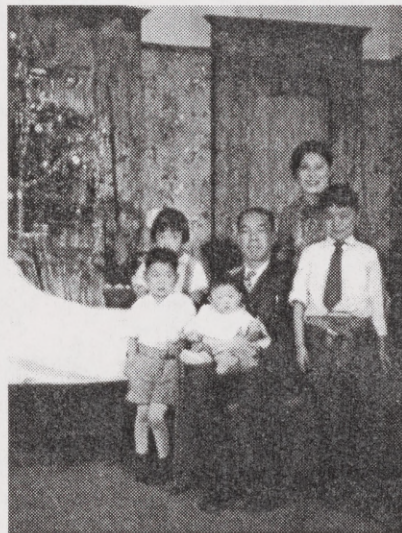
Marion, Seattle (1929)



Family photo, Seattle (1931)



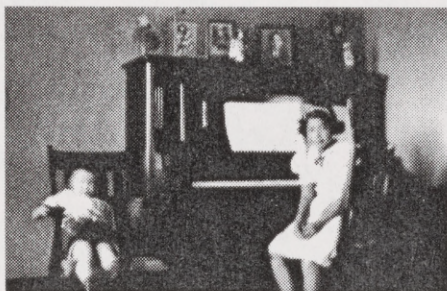
Seattle (1931)



Christmas, Seattle (1934)



Father and brothers, Robert and Richard, Seattle (1940)



Marion at family piano, Seattle

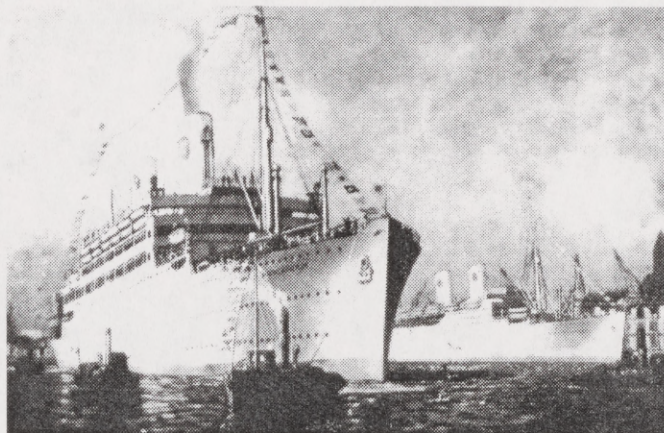


School play, Seattle  
Marion, top row, fourth from right

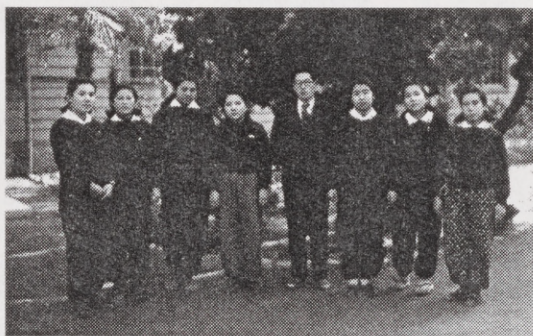




Minidoka Internment Camp (1942)  
Brothers, Robert and Richard; Mother, and Marion



S.S. Gripsholm (1943)



English teaching aides, Japanese Girls High School (1946)  
Marion, third from left



Marion as interpreter for U.S. Army Lieutenant  
(December, 1945)

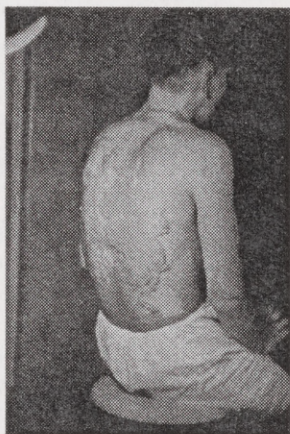
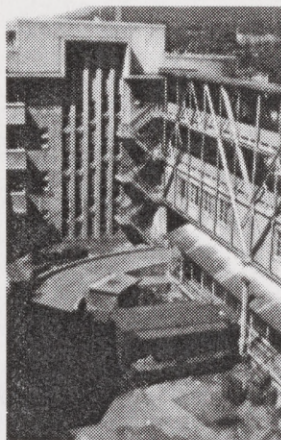


Photo of atomic bomb survivor  
taken while working at U.S.  
Army Hospital



U.S. Army Hospital, 364th  
Station, Kyoto, Japan



Passport photo for return to  
United States (November, 1947)



August 21, 1985

TSUTAK

Kiichi Tsutakawa-Yasuno(1) Kinu (2)  
700 Nishiebara-Cho  
Ibara, Okayama Japan  
born 1850-??

1st son 1877	1st Daughter	2nd Son	3rd Son	4th Son	2nd Daughter	5th Son	3rd Daughter	4th Daughter
Shozo-Hisako Tsutakawa	Hatsune-..... Izumi	Raihei-Iwayo Tsutakawa	Yutaka-Towa Tsutakawa	Jin-Michiko Tsutakawa	Kiyoka-.... Noma	George-Yachiyo Tsutakawa	Komatsu-..... Maezawa	Fusako- ..... Maezawa

ABOVE FAMILY 3rd Generation		# S/D	Family Name	4th Generation	City	Family Name	5th Generation (sons and daughters)
Shozo-Hisako Koteru Tsutakawa	Tomoko-.....	1st D	Nakanishi	Haruo(M)	Kyoto	Nakanishi	2 Sons
	Kyoto			Sadao(M)	Kyoto	Nakanishi	2 sons
				Shigeo(M)	Tokyo	Nakanishi	3 Daughters
				Takao(M)	Sapporo	Nakanishi	2 sons 1 Daughter
	Sadako-Fujimatsu	2nd D	Moriguchi	Kenzo (M)Carol	Seattle	Moriguchi	2 son 3 Daughters (Michael, Kevin, Traci Lisa, Kristi)
	Seattle			Suwako(F)James	Seattle	Maeda	3 Daughter (Jamie, Tammie, Amy)
				Tomio(M) Lovett	Seattle	Moriguchi	1 Son 1 Daughter (Tyler, Denise)
				Akira(M) Christa	Seattle	Moriguchi	1 Daughter (Lena)
				Hisako(F)Harvey	Seattle	Nakaya	1 Son 1 Daughter (Jason, Shelley)
				Toshi(M) Susie	Seattle	Moriguchi	2 Daughters (Lia, Miye)
				Tomoko(F)Koji	Seattle	Matsuno	2 Daughters (Mineko, Mayumi)
Takeo-Miyako Tokyo	Miyako	1st S	Tsutakawa	Masayoshi (M)	Saga	Tsutakawa	2 Daughters (.....)
	Miyako			Nobuyoshi (M)	Yokohama	Tsutakawa	1 Son 1 Daughter (.....)
	Teruyo			Tadayoshi (M)	Chiba	Tsutakawa	3 Sons (.....)
	Teruyo			Keiko(F)	Yokohama	Ban	2 Daughters (.....)
				Michiko(F)	Saitama	.....	2 Daughters (.....)
George Ayame Seattle		2nd S	Tsutakawa	Jerry(M)Judy	Seattle	Tsutakawa	2 Daughters (Kyla, Zona)
				Mayumi (F) Glen	Seattle	Chinn	1 Son (Kenzan)
				Deems(M) Jeanie	Seattle	Tsutakawa	no Children
				Marcus(M) Paula	Seattle	Tsutakawa	no children
Masakatsu		3rd Son					
Yoshio		4th Son					
Sumiko-.....		3rd D	Oki	Mamoru(M)Akiko	Saitama	Oki	1 Son (Soichi)
Tokyo				Naotake(M)Michiko	Yokohama	Oki	2 S 1D (Takehiko, Mika, Naohiko)
				Ryozo(M)Hideko	Seattle	Oki	1 Son 1 Daughter (Emi, Kazuo)
Reiko		4th D					
Kazuko-.....		5th D	Yamashita	Koichiro(M).....	Tokyo	Yamashita	1 Daughter (Hiroko)
Tokyo				Fumiko(F).....	Saitama	.....	.....
1 Hatsune-Hidetaro Izumi	Kotoko-.....	1st D	Nakatsuka	Chieko(F).....	.....	.....	.....
	.....			Keiko(F).....	.....	.....	.....
	.....			Keiichi(F).....	.....	.....	.....
Hiroyo-.....		2nd D	Ogawa	Sanji (M).....	.....	Ogawa	.....
	.....			Kohei (M).....	.....	Ogawa	.....
	.....			Shigeo(M).....	.....	Ogawa	.....
Chiyota-Misako		1st S	Izumi	Miko(F).....	.....	.....	.....
	.....			Tota(M).....	.....	Izumi	.....
	.....			Eriko(F).....	.....	.....	.....
	.....			Harumi (F).....	.....	.....	.....
	.....			Eiji (F).....	.....	.....	.....

August 21, 1985

Raihei-Iwayo Tsutakawa	Sachiko-.....	1st D	Takekoshi	Yasuo(M)	.....	Takekoshi	.....
	Kenzo-shizue	1st S	Tsutakawa	Noriko(F).....	.....	.....	.....
	.....			Harumi (F).....	.....	.....	.....
				Kiyoshi (M).....	.....	Tsutakawa	.....
Fumiko-.....		2nd D	Takekoshi	Mizue(F).....	.....	.....	.....
	.....			Atsunao(M).....	.....	Takekoshi	.....
	.....			Shoji (M).....	.....	Takekoshi	.....
Yutaka-Towa Tsutakawa	Mitsugu-Sachiko	1st S	Tsutakawa	Michinobu(M).....	.....	Tsutakawa	.....
	.....			Keiko(F).....	.....	.....	.....
	.....			Toyokazu(M).....	.....	Tsutakawa	.....
Jin-Michiko Tsutakawa	Masao(Ed)-Hide	1st S	Tsutakawa	Nancy(F).....	.....	.....	.....
	Spokane			Margaret (F).....	.....	.....	.....
	.....			Mark (M).....	.....	Tsutakawa	.....



Tsuyoshi-Chieko 2nd S	Tsutakawa	Ken(M).....	Tsutakawa	.....
.....		Tetsuo(M).....	Tsutakawa	.....
Hideko(F)Joe 1st D	Yada	Gail(F).....	Seattle	.....
Seattle		Jeffery(M)	Spokane	Yada .....
Thomas(M)-Kiki 3rd S	Tsutakawa	Trisha(F)-Rex	Redmond	1 Son (Kernan)
Seattle		Laurie(F)-Tomie	Seattle	1 Son (.....)
Kiyoka-Yasutaka	Naoki(M)-Michiko 1 S	Shinichi(M).....	Noma	.....
Noma		Kojiro(M).....	Noma	.....
		Keizo(M).....	Noma	.....
Yoshindo-Haruko 2nd S	Tsutakawa	Yoichi(M).....	Tsutakawa	.....
.....		Hiromi(M).....	Tsutakawa	.....
Geroge-Yachiyo	Yoshikane-Keiko 1st S	Ken(M)-Yumika	Tsutakawa	Son (Shingo) Daughter (Aya)
Tsutakawa		Mayumi(F)		.....
Masako(F) 1st D	Kanemoto	Ryusanne(F).....		.....
.....		Arlene(F) Jim	Powlesland	Son (Tyler)
		Laurie(F) Mike	Miyasaki	Daughter (Ashlyn) Son (Brandon)
		Ames(M).....	Kanemoto	.....
Keiji-Teruko 2nd S	Tsutakawa	Kiyoshi(M).....	Tsutakawa	.....
.....		Kazuo(M).....	Tsutakawa	.....
		Suzan(F).....		.....
Yozo-Francis 3rd S	Tsutakawa	Renee(F) HENRY	Matsutani	Daughter (Wagelyn)
San Francisco		Craig(M).....	Tsutakawa	.....
Komatsu-.....	Shizuko-..... 1st D	Chiaki(M).....	Yamada	.....
Maezawa		Minoru(M).....	Yamada	.....
Fusako- Yasuo-Toshiko 1st S	Maezawa	Akiko(F).....		.....
Maezawa		Hiroko(F).....		.....
		Naohiro(M).....	Maezawa	.....
Keiko- 1st D	Higuchi	Yukiko(F).....		.....
.....		Tatsuko(F).....		.....
Toshio-Sumiko 1st S	.....	Satoru(M).....	Maezawa	.....
.....		Nobuko(F).....		.....
Teruo-Shizuko 2nd S	Maezawa	Akio(M).....	Maezawa	.....
.....				.....
Fumiko-Koike 2nd D	.....			.....
.....				.....

August 21, 1985

9 2nd generation 33 third generation

83 4th generation

Please fill in ..... if known and send to:

Toshi Moriguchi  
651 Industrial Way S  
Seattle, Wash 98108  
USA

Any bits of information will be appreciated like birthdays, death years, etc.



Marion M. Iwatsuka

# 卒業證書



蔦川雅子

昭和三年一月三星

右本校所定ノ課程ヲ

卒業セリ仍テ之ヲ證ス

昭和廿一年三月卅一日

岡山縣井原高等女學校長正六位藤原音五郎



第一七〇二號



# Saint Mary's Hospital

## School of Nursing

Rochester, Minnesota

**T**his Certifies that **Marion Masako Tautakawa**  
has completed the established Course of Instruction and Practice in the  
School of Nursing, has satisfactorily passed all the required examinations,  
and is, therefore, awarded this Diploma.

In Witness Whereof we have set our hands and affixed the  
Seal of the Hospital.

C. W. Mayo  
Francis B. Bepko  
William Walter  
R. D. Mussey  
Bayard W. Horton

A. W. Adson  
Philip S. Hench  
R. M. ...  
Sister Mary Hugh  
Sister M. Julie

Dated September 6, 1951



# CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

On the recommendation of the faculty of the University and the

## DIVISION OF NURSING

the Trustees of The California State University and Colleges

have conferred upon

*Marion Masako Kanemoto*

in recognition of the fulfillment of the requirements, the degree of

## BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN NURSING

with all the rights, privileges, and honors thereto pertaining

Given at Sacramento this twenty-seventh day of July, nineteen hundred and seventy-three.



*Ronald Reagan*  
Governor and President  
of the Trustees

*Karl L. Wente*  
Chairman  
Board of Trustees

*James L. Danaher*  
Chancellor

*James G. Bond*  
President of the University

